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DISCENCES
OF THE 34th BATTALION
IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

Thomas C. Wetton.

X

To Charles & Gabrielle
from
Jm. Buckley.

Feb. 1908.

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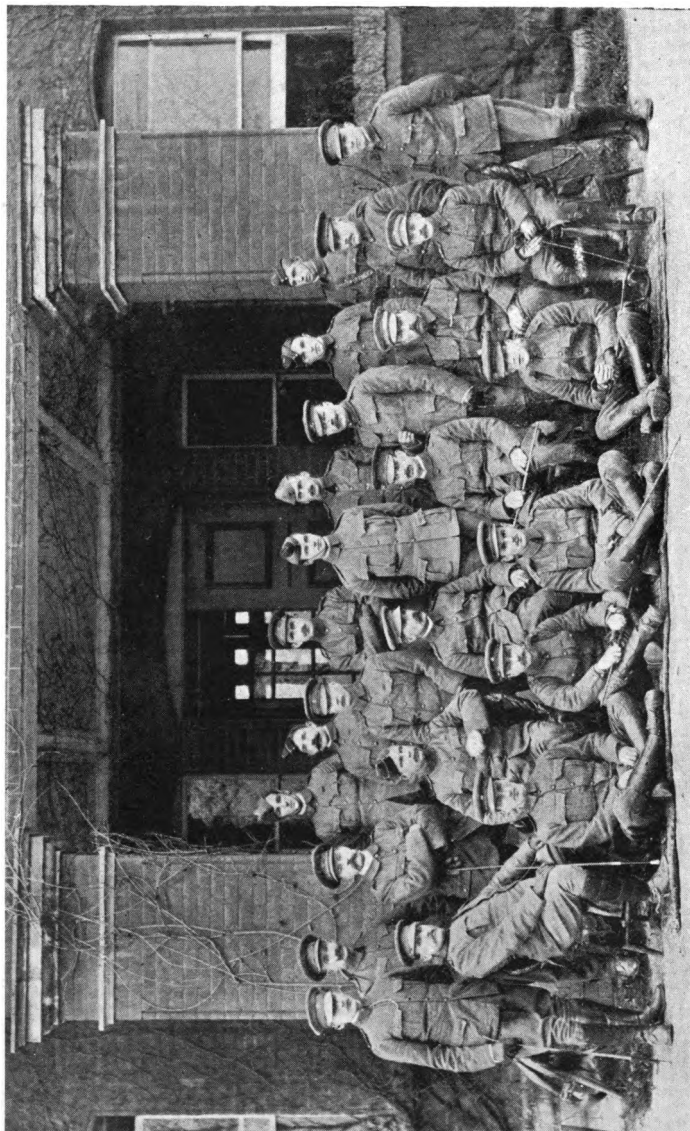
WILLIAM ENDICOTT, JR.

(Class of 1887)

OF BOSTON

To Charles F. Johnson
from
John D. Smith

1897



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(Reading from left to right).

OFFICERS OF THE 34TH BATTALION, IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

THIRD AND FOURTH ROWS: Lt. F. K. St. M. Ritchie; Capt. E. G. Williams (Adj.); Lt. J. B. Nolan (Q.-M.); Lts. C. T. D. Russell, G. Miller, J. F. De Rees, G. J. Imry, C. F. Clarke, E. G. Jones, P. F. Trotter, W. S. G. Morris, G. C. Green-Price, H. de J. Hozarth, R. C. Power.

FIRST AND SECOND ROWS: Capt. Aglionby; Lt. H. J. Henman; Capt. M. Martyn; Lt. A. H. Luard; Col. T. Roch; Lt. R. H. Montgomery; Major W. W. Chitty; Lt. C. R. Roch; Capt. S. R. Fothergill; Capt. J. F. H. Buckley.

PLATE I.

REMINISCENCES

OF THE

34th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry

BY

THOMAS C. WETTON,

*Ex-Trooper, 151st Company, 34th Battalion,
Imperial Yeomanry.*

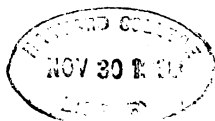
*Author of "With Rundle's Eighth Division in South
Africa."*

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON :

SIDEY AND BARTLETT,
3 Ferrestone Buildings, Tottenham Lane,
Hornsey, N.

Apr 8292.45



Gift of
William Endicott, Jr.

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THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY SPECIAL
PERMISSION,
TO
The Right Honourable VISCOUNT MILNER,
G.C.B., G.C.M.G., &C.,
AS A SMALL TRIBUTE
IN APPRECIATION OF HIS GREAT AND IMPERIAL
SERVICES RENDERED TO THE BRITISH
EMPIRE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

*Copy of the letter received from The Right Honourable
Viscount Milner, G.C.B., etc.*

STURRY COURT,
STURRY,
KENT.

November 27th, 1907.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to thank you for your proposal to dedicate
your book to me and am happy to accept the offer.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

(Signed) MILNER.

T. C. WETTÓN, Esq.

PREFACE.

So many books have already appeared dealing with the comparatively recent South African campaign that one naturally experiences some temerity, at this period, in again entering the "lists" and claiming the kindly indulgence of the reading public with yet another.

But as the best of apologies are apt to be misconstrued by some, I will refrain from unnecessary excuses, in extenuation of my conduct respecting the appearance of this additional work and confine my remarks rather to its aims and objects.

Primarily, with the advice of friends, it has been my endeavour to place within the hands of my officers and comrades who served in the 34th Battalion (also their friends) a record of our South African experiences and personal reminiscences—a souvenir which I fervently-trust may meet in every way with their approbation.

To the general public I would point out that while this present work makes no pretence of being a history of the War, but only a record of the doings of the 34th Battalion of Yeomanry, yet incidentally I would mention some of its salient features: our Aldershot training, incidents of the voyage, treks in Zululand and the Vryheid district and the advantages which these localities offer to the settler.

But especially would I direct attention to the fact that the *five months' training* at Aldershot transformed the raw material in our ranks into efficiently trained men who

would undoubtedly make excellent soldiers, so that the 1902 Yeomanry were probably better fitted to take the field than any of their predecessors. Therefore, in view of this fact, it is my sincere hope that the perusal of this volume may not only prove interesting reading, but also act as a wholesome deterrent upon any who moved by the baneful influence of misconceived ideas, are prejudiced against any movement having for its aim and object, *universal training for the Nation's manhood*.

In conclusion, I am greatly indebted to our Commanding Officer, Colonel T. Roch, for kindly supplying me with official notes; to Captain J. F. Buckley for the loan of photographs, which, together with my own snapshots, comprise the bulk of the illustrations; and also to other friends who have ably assisted me in this production.

THOMAS C. WETTON.

"St. Martin's,"

Church Lane,

Hornsey, N.

December, 1907.

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CHAPTER I.

TRAINING AT ALDERSHOT.

In conformity with an Army order of January 1st, 1902, which provided for an organisation into battalions at Aldershot of yeomen locally recruited in various districts, the third contingent—commonly known as the “1902 Yeomanry”—was formed for active service in South Africa.

The response to this further appeal of the Government for Volunteers for war service was highly satisfactory and contingents of recruited men from various centres soon began to arrive at Aldershot, containing a fair proportion of those who had served previously in the Regular and Volunteer forces in the war.

Thirteen battalions of Imperial Yeomanry were formed—numbered consecutively from 27 to 39—into which were drafted these heterogeneous bodies.

The 34th Battalion was intended to be a Welsh one, and Sir H. L. Watkin Williams-Wynn—who had previously assisted to raise the first Welsh contingent in 1900—offered to raise this body at Wynnstay, Montgomeryshire, provided he might nominate the officers and superintend the training. This offer was not accepted and the command was conferred on Colonel T. Roch, at that time commanding the Pembroke Imperial Yeomanry.

The original idea of making the 34th Battalion a Welsh one was therefore not carried out, only one Company (151st) being composed mainly of Welshmen. This was in a great measure due to the faulty arrangements of the War Office, by which the men arrived at Aldershot before officers had been appointed and battalions formed, so that the former were allocated, under no settled plan, indiscriminately to each battalion as it was made up.

When formed, the 34th Battalion comprised the 151st, 152nd, 153rd and 154th Companies, with an approximate total of 470 officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

34th BATTALION IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

Colonel T. Roch	-	-	-	In command.
Major W. W. Chitty	-	Regimental 2nd in command.		
Captain E. G. Williams	-	Regimental Adjutant.		
Captain Williams	-	-	-	Medical Officer.
Lieutenant J. B. Nolan	-	-	-	Quarter-master.

151st Company ("A" Squadron).

Capt. J. F. H. Buckley (*Pembroke I.Y.*) - Officer in command of the Company.

Lieut. F. K. St. M. Ritchie	"	"	" A " troop.
" J. F. De Rees	"	"	" B " "
" R. C. Power	"	"	" C " "
" G. C. Green-Price	"	"	" D " "

152nd Company ("B" Squadron).

Captain S. R. Fothergill - Officer in command of
Company.

Lieut. P. F. Trotter (*Pembroke I.Y.*) ,, "A" troop.
,, H. J. Henman ,, "B" ,,
,, C. R. Roch (*Pembroke I.Y.*) ,, "C" ,,
,, G. J. Imry ,, "D" ,,

153rd Company ("C" Squadron).

Captain Aglionby* Officer in command of Company.

Lieut. A. H. Luard ,, ,, "A" troop.
,, H. de B. Hogarth ,, "B" ,,
,, H. R. Montgomery ,, "C" ,,
,, W. S. G. Morris (*Pembroke I.Y.*) "D" ,,

154th Company ("D" Squadron).

Captain M. Martyn, Officer in command of Company

Lieut. C. T. D. Russell ,, ,, "A" troop.
,, C. F. Clarke ,, ,, "B" ,,
,, G. Miller ,, ,, "C" ,,
,, E. G. Jones ,, ,, "D" ,,

The raw material in the ranks, with some few exceptions, was excellent as to the quality, but its knowledge of horses and riding was exceedingly limited. Roughly speaking, seventy-five per cent. of the men

* Captain Aglionby resigned at Aldershot and Lord Roberts promptly acceded to Colonel Roch's request for Captain R. Yorke, of the 11th Hussars, to be appointed to the 153rd Company.

could not ride at all; but with the help of the riding school and some of the Home Yeomanry Staff this was soon rectified. The shooting, however, was good. During the long stay at Aldershot—nearly five months—a very fair training was given to all ranks and the 1902 Yeomanry were probably better fitted to take the field than any of their predecessors.

As a considerable portion of both officers and men were accustomed to cavalry drill and organization, the latter system of training was adopted and found much easier to work.

For a considerable period I had entertained a keen desire to serve my country in the South African War in the capacity of a yeoman or mounted irregular. Despite my efforts, while in South Africa—where I was serving as a Volunteer in the Royal Army Medical Corps with the Eighth Division—to transfer to a mounted corps, I was unsuccessful. Hope certainly revived when after repeated requests and promises, our Commanding Officer put forward my application for a transfer, and the Principal Medical Officer of the Division recommended it to the Army Headquarters at Pretoria. But it got no further than this stage where it was promptly and officially quashed. At the termination of my Volunteer “active service” engagement and subsequent return to England and discharge in 1902, I began making immediate enquiries; went down to Aldershot by appointment, interviewed the Officer

Commanding the Yeomanry at Tourney Barracks, North Camp, and, after the usual preliminaries, was enlisted into the 151st Company, 34th Battalion, on April 5th. Four other recruits were enlisted at the same time, two being ex-soldiers and wearing their old uniforms, and one of the two civilians a young school-master.

At the medical examination I recognized in one of the examining doctors Captain Mansfield, late second officer of the 22nd Bearer Company, in the Eighth Division.

The battalion's quarters at Blenheim Barracks consisted of a series of long, low, brick structures, each building being divided into two rooms. The barracks at regular distances branched off to the right and left from the main avenue, which latter traversed their whole length and terminated at the Queen's Parade ground, which lay in the direction of South Camp. At the upper end of this avenue stood the guard room, commissariat stores, etc., and just opposite to the officers' quarters. A main road running to the right led to Malplaquet Barracks, the cavalry stables and Tournay Barracks, the quarters of the 38th and 39th Battalions of Yeomanry. In the same neighbourhood other roads and avenues led past the military prison, commonly called the "glass house," to more parade grounds, the riding-school and the riding parade ground—appropriately named the "dust heap"—hard by the hospital and Wellington lines.

To the left of Blenheim Barracks and skirting the

Queen's Parade ground the road led into the Farnborough high road and just opposite to the Queen's Hotel. This building just previously had been destroyed by fire and stood a gaunt and blackened ruin.*

Having located my Company's quarters, I interviewed Squadron Sergeant-Major T. Trudgeon, and, in his cosy little room I was soon being interrogated by him and a couple of sergeants upon my campaign experiences. The sergeant-major I found a very decent fellow and later he good-naturedly introduced me to some of the sergeants in the mess and also to my new companions in "B" troop in the barrack room. They proved to be fine fellows, full of fun and pranks, and gave me a hearty welcome, endeavouring to make me feel at home amongst them. As many had come from or near Wales I felt, as an Englishman, somewhat of an interloper in their midst. But whatever qualms I may have experienced upon that account were soon dispelled by their friendliness towards me. They candidly informed me, however, that as I was an Englishman, they would have to teach me Welsh, to which I as frankly replied that I was quite agreeable to this proposition but strongly objected to learning words of fifty-seven letters full of l's, p's and w's. One fellow especially, whom I will call Charley David, was a unique character. His

* This outbreak of fire occurred in the dinner hour and the Yeomanry, who were quickly on the spot, rendered good service by rescuing furniture from the burning building and in policing the crowds.

nationality was uncertain, but I believe it was a mixture of Irish and Welsh. He was an illiterate, and professed to be a poacher in civil life. But despite his imperfections he proved a decidedly interesting personality. From the first he took to me, frequently rendering little personal services. He did not entirely lack a temper which sometimes unpleasantly showed itself, but I believe only once towards myself. Often-times when excited he would lapse into Welsh. In the same language other Welshmen would join in, and the flow of utterly unintelligible words—to me at any rate—was most humorous.

My name was duly entered on the “roster” (a military list), my regimental number (44559) allotted to me and notified in the battalion’s orders. On the third morning I marched with others to the stables and was initiated into horse-grooming. One subaltern raised some objection to my appearance in kharki R.A.M.C. uniform, but as I had not troubled to purchase any civilian clothing in the short interval between my return to England and subsequent enlistment in the Yeomanry, I had perforce to appear in something. I took the hint and began to agitate at the battalion quarter-master’s stores for my kit. As the sergeant happened to be absent I was requested by his subordinates to defer awhile my application, but, profiting by previous experiences, I declined. Every few hours I kept worrying them and they must have blessed me accordingly—or probably the other thing! Four days after

my enrolment I was warned for duty with the night town picquet and had to join the guard in borrowed feathers in the shape of a cavalry greatcoat, bandolier, belt, bayonet and spurs which the quarter-master's representative hastily got together for me. Early the next day I got my kit. This was fortunate and simplified matters, especially as the whole battalion was paraded the same day, in full marching order, on the Queen's Parade ground and photographed.

The next morning the battalion paraded, mounted, to engage in a sham fight with another Yeomanry battalion in the Long Valley. The big horse allotted me I mounted with much difficulty. My new riding breeches fitted me like a glove and felt as stiff as boards, and greatly impeded my movements. I could scarcely bend my knees sufficiently to reach the stirrup, my horse got fidgety, and my accoutrements weighed me down and further hindered my action. At last I somehow reached the saddle and rode with the battalion to the Long Valley. Here we halted and were ordered to dismount ! Upon remounting my difficulties were repeated, but a sympathetic non-com. upon my right half dragged me into the saddle, and our officer, who happened to glance over his shoulder at this inauspicious moment, drily remarked : " Well, that's a pretty way to mount ! "

We were inspected by a staff officer and his subordinates and then the manœuvring commenced : wheeling to the right and left in troop and squadron

formation and numerous other cavalry evolutions. During one of these movements my rifle sling by some means became unfastened. I made a frantic backward grab as I felt my weapon slipping from my shoulder but just missed it, and of course I had to dismount to recover it. How I got into the saddle again I don't know but I greatly deplored such exhibitions before my troop, who, on account of my previous service, had erroneously regarded me as an expert horseman! Our sham fight or rather, tactical exercise with the "foe," then commenced. The "enemy" were distinguished by their slouch hats, whilst our battalion wore their field service caps. Our squadron galloped to the foot of a small hill, and, screened by the rising ground, dismounted, the third man of each section of four remaining mounted and holding the four horses. The dismounted men climbed the rise and just peering over its summit, were enabled to reconnoitre the "enemy's" positions beyond. Fortunately, as third man, I remained mounted. Even in this post I found a certain method was required for correctly holding the horses to enable their respective owners easily to recover their reins and remount.

The enemy, then surrounding our position, compelled us hurriedly to mount and gallop across a plain and take refuge in a small copse some 900 yards distant. Here we captured one of the enemy's scouts. But the converging and ever-increasing rattle of the enemy's musketry soon showed our position to be an untenable

one despite our brisk return fire. It did, however, seem incongruous that just at the moment when we were supposed to be engaged in a deadly combat, a couple of enterprising itinerant vendors, who were in the copse, should be announcing their wares with : " Here you are, sir ! any apples, oranges, lemonade, ginger-beer or cake, sir ? "

We retreated at a mad gallop across the plain through the enemy's zone of fire to the security of the hills beyond. Had it been actual warfare I question whether many of us would have escaped injury from this cross-fire. The galloping horses kicked up such a terrible dust that it was impossible, amid the clouds of grit and small stones to see far ahead, compelling one to sit tight and let his animal follow the others. Then when one drew rein and cleared his eyes, we had to discover our troop from among the chaos of horsemen. The morning's performance was very interesting, exciting and exhilarating.

A few days latter I had to attend at the medical inspection room and submit to the ordeal of vaccination, but was glad that the lymph failed to take any effect. Another day I was the barrack room orderly, having to draw the rations and meals, wash the platter and tables, sweep the room, stoke the fire and amuse myself between whiles. Being excused all outside duty for the day I had a fairly easy time.

A week later we had another tactical exercise, the

opposing force, as heretofore, being distinguished from ourselves by their headgear. Our battalion started shortly before 8 a.m., rode through the village of Ash and the surrounding country and halted at Frensham. Here the officers and umpires consulted together concerning the plan of action against the enemy who were approaching from South Camp, Aldershot.

As a preliminary measure scouting parties commenced searching the neighbourhood. I was detailed with three others to search a wood near by. At the outset one of my companions was caught and thrown from his saddle by an overhanging branch as his horse galloped underneath, but escaped with a shaking. Another of our party, in advance of the rest, was captured by the enemy, and firing commencing, we hastily rejoined our troop. Soon our battalion was vigorously attacked by the enemy hidden in another part of the wood, and then began a series of violent attacks, and defensive movements and counter-attacks; hurriedly galloping up to a position, dismounting, firing for several minutes, then mounting and galloping along the lanes to temporarily check the enemy first at one point and then at another. Our troops and sections got mixed up in almost indescribable confusion, but amid it all each man seemed to know his work and did it. When all was over it was wonderful how quickly each man recovered his right place.

Our captain informed us that the umpire-general was

highly gratified at the manner in which we had outflanked the enemy. Throughout the manœuvre the officers had been doing their best to check individual indiscretions of exposure on the skyline of the hills, and giving other sundry hints to the men, thereby endeavouring to improve our knowledge of some of the essential principles of scouting in warfare.

Our appearance created much curiosity in the villages through which we passed. At one the schoolmaster paraded his scholars outside the school—a privilege the youngsters much enjoyed.

Each day's routine in barracks generally commenced by reveillé at six o'clock, followed by "fall in" and "roll call" in the open air a few minutes later, many rushing on to parade in a half-clad condition and shivering in the cold, biting air as they finished buttoning their jackets or lacing their boots. The battalions then marched to the stables near Tournay Barracks, where an hour was spent in grooming, feeding and watering the horses and cleaning the stables. Then back to barracks where we completed our toilet, partook of breakfast, made our beds, cleaned our equipment and paraded again for rifle inspection. The morning's programme would probably consist of a sham fight in the Long Valley or neighbourhood, riding and mounted drill exercise on Ball Hill or the "dust heap," foot and rifle drill on the Queen's Parade ground or scouting on foot in the open country beyond. Attendance at stables

at noon. Dinner at one o'clock followed by more riding, drilling or scouting in the afternoon, or at the stables for an hour-and-a-half cleaning the saddlery, grooming, watering and feeding the horses.

The number of horses being limited, the different squadrons had to arrange each day's programme so as to enable the remounts to be handed over from one party to another after an hour's riding drill. Thus our squadron would sometimes ride out from the stables, and after an hour's exercise on Ball Hill, hand over our remounts to another squadron, which had marched down whilst we returned to barracks on foot, or *vice versâ*. When we took the horses from the stables it was generally a case of every man for himself, as each yeoman, at the word of command, dashed into the stables to secure the animal he had mentally selected.

Tea was served at four o'clock and then we were practically free for the remainder of the day. But guards, and town and stable picquets were mounted each evening according to the *roster*.

Often the riding exercises would be full of incident and humour. Sometimes individual yeomen riding at a canter with others in troop or squadron formation would wheel in the wrong direction and cause confusion among the remainder. At other times a horse would prove unruly and bolt. Once I suffered this exciting experience. My animal dashed madly away, but our

wild career soon terminated at a notice board at which the horse shied suddenly. I quickly found myself in a horizontal position on the ground, still hanging on to the reins, but happily unhurt.

The officers always endeavoured to impart a degree of smartness into their respective troop or squadron, and were frequently severe with any delinquent. Officers' colloquies to these offenders, especially during the riding, generally embraced a part of each day's exercises: "Now then, men, do it smarter than that!" "Look alive there!" "You *must* keep in a line!" "That man there, you must keep up!" "Why the dickens don't you keep up!" "Hang you, there, why don't you keep up!" "Keep up, keep up!" "Why don't you do as you're told?" "Now let me see you do it right this time!" "Why don't you keep up?" "Don't you see you're throwing the whole troop out?" "Why don't you get into your place?" "Get into your place, that man there!" "If I ever did see such a fool!" &c., &c. Sometimes the exasperated officer, losing all patience, would dash up to the lagging one and vent his wrath on the poor innocent animal's flanks.

But apart from the humorous standpoint our tuition was exceedingly interesting. The cavalry drill; the riding in troop and squadron formations; in close and extended orders; the dismounting for attack or defence; the remounting and galloping to better positions and numerous other modes of assault and defence enabled

much individual information to be acquired. The scouting also improved one's powers of observation and tended to develop the intellectual faculties, enabling individual initiative in gathering information of the enemy, and by decoys and other methods, attempt to thwart their movements.

Accidents were not entirely absent from our riding exercises and manœuvres by men being thrown from their mounts but the percentage of casualties was small. Only three mishaps to my knowledge occurred in our battalion, viz:—Trooper Dakin, left arm fractured; Farrier-sergeant Jones, fractured ankle; *Sergeant C. Davies, fractured leg.

Our Squadron upon one occasion was posted behind a low wall skirting a copse to hold a small bridge on our right-front, which led towards another copse on the opposite side of the clearing. The enemy having revealed their presence, firing was maintained briskly for several minutes. Then, to our astonishment, and despite our vigorous fire, the subaltern in charge, closely followed by his attacking party, suddenly dashed across the bridge and attempted to scale our wall, calling upon us to surrender. Theoretically the enemy were all dead men as such a small force could not have so easily accomplished this feat in face of our vigorous fire. But

* Sergeant C. Davies was discharged from hospital in time to sail with us to South Africa.

their frantic behaviour shewed them to be very much alive. One of our men deeply resented surrender under such conditions and refused to give up his rifle to the excited officer, loudly maintaining the other was dead, and quite an amusing and determined struggle ensued across the wall between the subaltern and the trooper for the possession of the contested weapon. The lieutenant finally abandoned the struggle and our officer and party then retiring into the copse, the wall was quickly scaled. Ultimately, I believe some compromise was effected between the two officers, but I heard that the dashing young subaltern came in for a good deal of chaff from his brother officers that night in the mess.

We were also initiated into and practised the duties of night picquets on outposts and cossack posts, all of which were interesting and enjoyable.

Foot-drill was not neglected. Usually we exercised on the Queen's Parade ground or in the open country beyond; marching or doubling in close or extended order, lying down, aiming, firing, fixing bayonets, etc. Everyone appeared to take a deep interest in this valuable military and physical tuition, and it is much to be deprecated that more of the nation's young manhood has not yet seriously realized the vital and urgent necessity of national training for self-defence and endeavoured to become efficient Volunteers or Soldiers. Obviously such training would be a valuable asset to the nation; the more perfect development of our latent

patriotism ; improved physiques, morality, manliness, self-reliance and a proper recognition that the enjoyment of our rights and privileges entails *pro rata*, individual responsibilities, duties and sacrifices for the safety, well-being and progress of the Empire.

On Saturdays the horses were usually exercised in the mornings, and after stables at noon we were at liberty to leave barracks for the remainder of the day, and those who had previously obtained passes could spend the week-end either at home or with relatives and friends. Wet days were generally taken advantage of for kit inspections in the barracks.

Stables were attended early on Sunday mornings ; Church parades at 10.45 a.m. ; and the afternoons and evenings were free. In the evenings, both Sundays and week-days, after smartening ourselves up, we would spend in Farnborough, Aldershot or along the pleasant country roads in the neighbourhood, and the shopkeepers drove a brisk trade during the Yeomanry's training.

The soldiers' homes, under the auspices of the "Church of England" and "Soldiers' Christian Association," both at North and South Camps, and supported mainly by voluntary contributions, were well patronized by all ranks, who gladly availed themselves of the comfortable recreation rooms, where the use of books, magazines, games and writing materials were provided gratis to men in uniform. Refreshments were

supplied at extremely moderate tariffs, and were also well patronised. Prayer meetings were held during the evenings, and at the well-attended Sunday evening services of the Soldiers' Christian Association Home I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of its kindly superintendent, Mr. Pearce, and several Christian soldiers.

Most of us found the time in barracks pass very enjoyably and quickly, each day's work being more of a pleasure than a duty. Witticisms and mirth-provoking incidents were the order of the day. We were, apparently, all over-grown schoolboys. A few days after my enlistment new recruits were subjected to a barrack-room court-martial and sentenced to a "blanketing." I was one of these unfortunate gentlemen but after some resistance was eventually caught, laid upon a blanket and my crime announced—viz: "enlisted in the Imperial Yeomanry"—and sentenced. Several men then seized the edges of the blanket and by their united efforts I was shot ceiling-wards three times in succession and then released. A stranger from another barrack-room entering at the moment and enquiring for a friend was pounced upon for a blanketing. But he objected so strongly to this projected treatment, that, hastily eluding his would-be captors and being chased to his own quarters, a free fight almost ensued between the two rooms.

During periods of leisure those of an excitable

temperament would speedily destroy any approaching sign of *ennui*. Often times we had what was colloquially known as "a rough house," when bolster fights and bed-tipping and upsetting took place. We all had to take a share in these disturbances. To remain a passive onlooker generally resulted in the speedy receipt of a clinging embrace from behind by a flying bolster, which knocked one breathless. Any rash yeoman who attempted to escape from the room during the *meleé* had to run through a perfect bombardment of flying bolsters and mattresses.

Sometimes matters went a trifle too far and had we been Regulars instead of Yeomen we might have got into grave trouble by our indiscretions. Late one night the "corporal of the guard" came to our room—when lights were out—and warned a certain bugler to go on guard. Not knowing the man personally, he stood at the door and called him by name. Several mimicked him; others answered in Welsh. The bugler remained silent and finally someone threw a bolster at the non-com. At this indignity he immediately departed and reported the matter to the "sergeant of the guard," who briskly arrived with an armed escort and interrogated several men in the darkness until a flying bolster cut short his examination. This outrage was more than he could stand. By the flickering light of the fast-dying fire he took our names, and although several of us feigned sleep we did not thereby escape. Being

unable to discover the culprits the sergeant and his escort then departed, adding, as a parting shot, that we were all prisoners until the morning. I heard later that the non-com. in charge of our room got a severe lecturing from the officer next morning, but fortunately for ourselves, we heard nothing more of the affair.

On April 29th the Commander-in-Chief (Field-Marshal Earl Roberts), accompanied by Major-General Lord Chesham, Colonel A. G. Lucas, and Major W. M. Sherston visited Aldershot and inspected the battalions of Imperial Yeomanry prior to their departure for South Africa.

As sufficient horses for mounting the whole of the Yeomanry at the same time could not be found, even by borrowing from the cavalry, the 27th, 28th, 32nd, 33rd and 35th mounted battalions were first inspected and carried out their manœuvres in the morning.

The 34th, 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th battalions marched to Rushmoor Green, by the Duke of Wellington's statue, and at 1.30 p.m. took over the horses from the other five battalions. Drawn up in battalion formation, Lord Roberts—a little grey-haired but withal smart, military gentleman—passed down our ranks and expressed his satisfaction at our appearance. The distinguished soldier was accompanied by Lieutenant-General Sir H. J. T. Hildyard—then temporarily in command at Aldershot—and other officers.

On reaching Long Valley our battalion, with another immediately took advantage of the cover afforded by the folds of the ground overlooking the plain, by dismounting and remaining concealed just below the summits while holding these series of ridges. The firing soon commenced and we retired from one position to another. Early in the conflict we captured a party of the enemy's scouts who galloped into our midst. The battle as it proceeded aroused the martial excitement of both man and beast. The excitement of war was in our veins as we galloped from hill to hill, took cover, dismounted, climbed a ridge, fired some rounds at the enemy, rejoined our horses, mounted, and were off again. Our horses would scarcely wait for their respective riders to reach and mount them, so eager were they to be off. It was useless trying to restrain them—they knew their work far better than some of us did. It was a case of simply letting them go and trusting to their highly trained instinct to carry us through aright. Once when galloping across a bit of open country towards a copse, a horse collided with some posts. Its rider was thrown, but the animal continued its wild career with the others, wheeling briskly to the right when the troop suddenly turned into the copse. I admired that animal! Fortunately its rider was only slightly shaken and soon remounted. We returned to the barracks of the 7th Hussars, handed over our borrowed mounts, and marched back to our quarters after a very enjoyable afternoon.

The following account of this day's proceedings appeared in *The Standard* (London), April 30th, 1902.

"The Commanded-in-Chief, accompanied by Major General Lord Chesham, Inspector General of Imperial Yeomanry; Colonel A. G. Lucas, Deputy Adjutant General, Imperial Yeomanry; and Major W. M. Sherston, Aide-de-Camp, yesterday visited Aldershot, where he inspected the whole of the force of Imperial Yeomanry, namely, ten battalions, prior to their departure for South Africa. Earl Roberts alighted at North Camp Station shortly after ten o'clock, where he was met by Lieut. General Sir H. J. T. Hildyard, Colonel the Hon. F. W. Stopford, Deputy Adjutant General; Colonel C. H. Bridge, Assistant Adjutant General, Major General Sir G. H. Marshall, commanding Royal Artillery; Major-General F. W. Hemming, commanding Cavalry Brigade, and other members of the Staff.

Received by a Guard of Honour of the 3rd Manchester Regiment, and attended by an escort of Royal Horse Artillery, the Commander-in-Chief rode first to the Queen's Parade, where, drawn up in column, mounted, and in field day order, were the 32nd and 35th Battalions Imperial Yeomanry. After a short inspection, which was witnessed by a large number of spectators, including Prince Arthur of Connaught, and Prince Alexander of Teck, the force was ordered to move away to the West of Aldershot and act as a retiring body under Lieut.

Colonel Kemp. In the meantime, while the force was taking up its position to defend its retreat, Lord Roberts inspected the 27th, 28th, and 33rd Battalions, who were formed up, mounted, on Rushmoor Green, and these were shortly afterwards despatched in pursuit of the enemy, Lieut. Colonel Turner being in command.

The movements of this force were followed by the Commander-in-Chief, who closely observed the work of the Yeomen. On coming under fire, they very rapidly availed themselves of the cover afforded by the folds of the ground in which to conceal their horses while they advanced dismounted to the attack. The centre of the position being for the most part exposed plain and valley, the operations took the form of two attacks on the flanks, The 28th Battalion were on the right of the "drive," which was bounded on this flank by the canal, and, moving with great rapidity, they drove the enemy from Mile's Hill back towards Pondtail Bridge. The 27th Battalion, moving over the broken ground to the South near the line of Hungry Hill, Cæsar's Camp, and Beacon Hill, also pushed back the defenders' right, while the centre of the defenders was being assailed by the 33rd Battalion, who ultimately gained Long Hill.

Imaginary reinforcements having by this time arrived from the Western main body, the tables were turned. and the three battalions were forced to beat a hasty retreat to the cover of Rushmoor Woods. Here the

operations terminated, and Lord Roberts, addressing the Yeomany officers, expressed his satisfaction at the work he had witnessed and the apparent care which the men had devoted to their horses, a subject which, he hoped, would constantly receive attention.

It should be explained that the operation was not conceived with the object of testing the tactical abilities of Commanders, but with a view of ascertaining the riding abilities of the men, their rapidity of initiative when committed to action, their ability to safeguard their horses under fire, their fire discipline, and their amenability to the control of their officers. The five battalions dismounted at one o'clock on Rushmoor Green, where the animals were fed, watered and rested, and then handed over to other five battalions, as only enough horses could be found, even by borrowing from the Cavalry, to mount half the Yeomen at one time.

During the afternoon a very similar operation was carried out by the remaining five battalions, namely, the 34th, 37th, 38th, and 39th. The opposing forces on this occasion were respectively commanded by Lieut. Colonel J. G. Beresford and Lieut. Colonel F. W. Towsey, and the Commander-in-Chief again expressed his satisfaction. Lieut. Colonel A. J. Godley, Deputy Assistant Adjutant General for Mounted Infantry; and Lieut. Colonel the Hon. J. E. Lindley, Commandant Yeomanry School, who have been responsible for the training and organis-

ation were present throughout the operations. Lord Roberts returned to London at half-past five".

Diphtheria having broken out among the Yeomanry battalions quartered at Marlborough lines, at the end of April, and some suspicious cases being also reported in Blenheim barracks, we were cautioned to take every means to keep our quarters in a thoroughly clean and sanitary condition, as fears were entertained that the Principal Medical Officer might otherwise have to delay our embarkation until the end of July or August. Rumours had been rife that we were to embark early in May and so the prospect of a prolonged delay was not pleasant. Officers and men were all anxious to embark, and every effort had been made to bring the Yeomanry to a state of efficiency. Inefficients were being carefully weeded out and discharged. During the training the men were paid at the cavalry scale of pay—*i.e.*, one shilling and fivepence per diem—and when passed as efficient at the higher rate of five shillings a day from the date of their efficiency or embarkation. Some weeks after my enlistment I was put through my course with some others at the riding school—riding with stirrups and reins, without stirrups, without reins, with folded arms, mounting and dismounting on the "near" and "off" sides, etc.

One afternoon some trouble occurred between a burly fellow in the 3rd Manchester Regiment at Malplaquet barracks close by, and a yeoman. A fight was fully

anticipated but did not take place. A few days later rumours reached us that the "Manchesters" contemplated attacking us that night in our barracks, and in anticipation of the threatened onslaught several fellows in our room slept fully dressed. Although we were not molested we all had our weapons handy for defence.

Upon one occasion a Welshman, who refused to take part in a barrack-room bolster fight was bombarded with several of these missiles. Instead of taking it in good part he lost his temper, seized a small poker and threatened to fling it at the next assailant. Immediately afterwards a bolster hit him, and full of anger, he flung his weapon with great force towards his adversary. As his aim was very erratic, and the missile bent like a boomerang, it deviated from its intended course, and happening to be quite close to him, I caught its full force upon my right arm just above the wrist. For a few moments I imagined my limb was broken. The bolstering immediately ceased, the fellows evidently anticipating a fight between us. Had a fisticuffing bout ensued they would readily have backed me up. Several wanted to put my assailant into the guard-room. But being in such pain for awhile I could do aught but grasp my injured limb and writhe in agony. To his credit the offender apologized for the blow and later paid my doctor's bill. A sergeant then entering the room warned me for the main guard that night—my name being the next on the roster—and the incident was temporarily

ended. But my barrack-room mates were not satisfied, and I heard subsequently that at a late hour the same night, when my aggressor was nearly asleep, several of the men upset his bed, pommelling him with mattresses and pillows and burying him amid a heap of bedding.

The main guard "fell in" at 5.30 p.m., fully armed and with fixed bayonets, relieving the "old guard" outside the guard room at 6 p.m., after first being inspected by the orderly officer and battalion sergeant-major. My "sentry go" was number "3" post, Blenheim lines, from 10 p.m. to midnight and again from 4 to 6 a.m. I did not enjoy it overmuch as my arm pained me considerably.

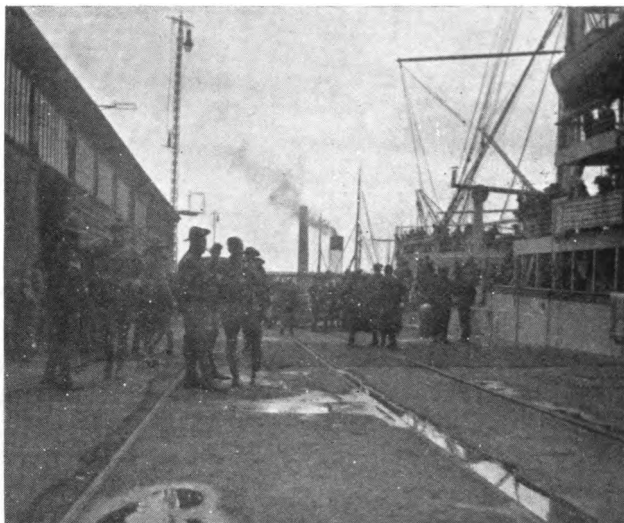
Early next morning I was relieved from further guard duties by a substitute, my name being among the party of recruits warned that day to go through their firing course at Ash ranges. It was a pleasant march to the ranges, but although a strong cross wind prevailed, the firing upon the whole was satisfactory. Each yeoman fired twenty-eight rounds that day. The kick of the rifle caused my arm great pain and I was half inclined to see the doctor, but feared he would probably excuse my firing for a few days, in which case my course would be incomplete and perhaps prevent my embarkation with the battalion, so I somehow endured it through the six days' course. Each man passed through his firing course satisfactorily, when several of us were granted a short furlough.

At the ranges I had the pleasure of meeting a yeoman who had seen service in the war as an artillery reserve man, and returned home with me previously on the s.s. *Britannic*.

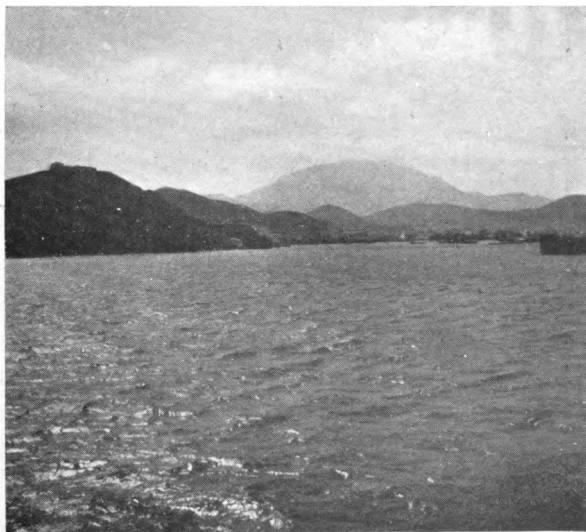
Our date of embarkation having been fixed for May 14th on the s.s. *Assaye*, my furlough terminated on Sunday, May 11th. The scene at Waterloo Station, London, that Sunday night was an animated one. The station was crowded with Regulars and Yeomen who were returning to Aldershot by the last train (10.30 p.m.) and the farewells with relatives and friends was everywhere a predominating feature. Hand - shaking, embracing, kissing, shouting, yelling, singing, jesting, repartees, pushing and struggling, soldiers and civilians mingled in an indescribable surging mass ; this exciting scene almost beggared adequate description. The train departed amid salvoes of hurrahs and cheers. It was with some relief when my journey was ended and I found myself again between the blankets in the barracks.

Our remounts, during my absence, having been handed over to the 38th Battalion, we were not required at the stables, and spent the Monday and Tuesday packing and marking our kits and stores preparatory to our embarkation.

As the day of our departure drew nigh the excitement increased and many of the men completely lost their self-control. It was hardly to be wondered at considering



EMBARKATION AT SOUTHAMPTON.



ST. VINCENT, CAPE VERDE ISLANDS.

(See page 40.)

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that many of them had been training for more than four months and were now anxious to reach South Africa, and each delay had exasperated them. Pillow fights became more frequent and on Tuesday as we were beginning our dinner a flying bolster swept the contents off my plate. Hardly had I recovered from my surprise when a second bolster completely emptied it and I gave up dinner as a hopeless task. One couldn't be angry, it would have been useless under such conditions to display temper.

An advance baggage guard left for Southampton the day previous to our embarkation. May 14th began with reveillé at four o'clock, and, after a hasty meal, we handed in our bedding, etc., to the stores. I was detailed with a party of fifty others (fully armed and in marching order) as the advance baggage guard for the officers' and men's kits, reaching Farnborough Station shortly before seven o'clock. The remainder of the 34th Battalion marched down later, headed by a band of the "Queen's." This early spring morning was warm and sunny, the country resplendent in the bright sunshine and the journey to Southampton full of interest. The populace of the villages and hamlets through which we passed responded to our exuberances by loud ovations, the enthusiasm of the inhabitants of Southampton, whose dwellings abutted on to the railway, being especially hearty. These enthusiastic outbursts revived pleasant memories within me of other days when similar scenes were enacted.

From the quayside our arms were taken aboard and stored in the ship's armoury by a speedy and efficient method. The 33rd and 34th Battalions, extended in a long single file from the quay up the gangway steps to the deck and armoury, passed each rifle with its attached bayonet and scabbard from man to man, until all were securely stored.

Our troop deck accommodation on the s.s. *Assaye* looked clean and comfortable. The mess-tables laid with cloths and bright enamelled platter looked inviting for the next meal. Animated scenes continued aboard and ashore during the whole morning. The decks were crowded with military and civil officials, friends and relatives of the departing passengers, also itinerant vendors with their magazines, papers and other wares. I had the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance of two missionary friends from the Soldiers' Home at Portsmouth, who were distributing gratuitously stationery and tracts throughout the messes, and adding words of cheer and encouragement to all.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, when the last bell had sounded and all friends and relatives and other non-passengers had hastily scrambled down the gangway steps on to the quay, the vessel was slowly tugged out from the dock amid the ovations, and hat, hand, handkerchief waving of the quayside crowds, to which we yeomen lustily responded while swarming upon deck, deckhouse,

rigging and every coign of 'vantage. The band of the 34th Battalion enlivened our departure with the National Anthem, "Men of Harlech," "Good-bye Dolly," "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," etc.

As we dropped down the Solent, past the Needles, and the last of England and home was visible only by a fast receding dim line, we sobered down gradually and began to discuss the voyage and our contemplated experiences in South Africa.

CHAPTER II.

BOUND FOR THE CAPE.

Having now entered upon our life aboard the s.s. Assaye, each yeoman, by a common human instinct, began to allocate his particular place at his respective mess. Kits were unpacked, many being entirely overhauled and then repacked. The resultant litter and confusion was apparently considered as a necessary preliminary adjunct to the commencement of the voyage.

“ Hammocks up ” having sounded, a motley crowd, indulging freely in banter, repartee, and witticisms, struggled below and secured from the quarter-master’s store their individual bedding which they tenaciously hugged as they re-appeared staggering up the congested gangway steps. Quickly the mess-decks were transformed into rows of swinging hammocks. Much jocularly prevailed during the “ slinging ” of the hammocks from the iron hooks fixed to the beams in the cabin roof. Some squabbled over individually-contested hooks, while others made unsuccessful attempts to roll into their suspended beds, with the usual colliding and tumbling out of, accompanied by protests and invectives from their immediate disturbed neighbours. Others, who were crowded out, gave up the attempt,

and made their beds on tables, forms, or the floor. Being an old hand at this work, I could well afford to indulge in a smile while watching the antics and difficulties of "hammock slinging" experienced by many of the novices so uncomfortably crowded together.

After a night of restless slumber—to the majority of the troops at least—passed in a hot, foul atmosphere, the morning's reveille at six o'clock was a welcome relief. Many did not feel quite so buoyant as on the previous day, and after "handing in" hammocks and reaching deck, felt very disinclined to go below again. Even the meals seemed to possess but little attraction—to several, a strong feeling of revulsion. Many lay about the decks and out-of-the-way places in grotesque attitudes, sorry victims of *mal de mer*, or took an all-absorbing interest in the mysteries of the mighty deep. Others were oppressed with a feeling of despondency, and inwardly deplored their unhappy condition. In the Bay of Biscay there was a sufficient swell to cause the majority of the landsmen extreme difficulty in maintaining a dignified equilibrium.

During the morning I was detailed with others to sweep the decks, but our sergeant was so deeply distressed by his gastronomic organs, and, consequently, so helpless in his supervision, that the majority of us—who were in a similar condition—after some desperate efforts, soon ceased our work. Charley David, our

ubiquitous Irish-Welshman, when jocularly reproved by our officer for neglecting his task, replied "Canna do it, sur; ship's dhrunk, sur!"

Upon the third day we emerged from the "dreaded" Bay, and during the early morning passed Cape Finisterre. By this time most of us had recovered from our temporary prostrations, and, with our troubles gone, at once began to fraternise and enjoy the good things aboard.

The s.s. Assaye was a fine vessel, and apparently made a good daily mileage. The passengers consisted of the 33rd and 34th battalions of Imperial Yeomanry, some officers, a few men of the South African Constabulary and other details, several non-coms. (Regulars), and a party of officers' wives with their families proceeding to St. Helena and South Africa to join their respective husbands. Five hospital sisters of the Army Nursing Sisters' Reserve were aboard—Sisters G. E. Male, S. A. Boneham, H. Anderson, A. Jones, M. Dowker, E. Johnson, M. W. Harrold, and M. J. Harrower—also Civil-nurse F. E. Thomas.

The Royal Army Medical Corps was represented by Major S. E. Duncan—the officer in charge of the hospital—and Civil-surgeon E. C. Masser.

There were eleven clergymen, ten being acting Chaplains—the Revs. C. A. Lane, J. H. Scott-Tucker, H. Heriot-Hill, W. P. J. McCormick, A. R. E.

Ledbetter, W. E. Williams, F. O. Proctor, L. A. Hughes, F. W. Hutchinson, R. E. Skene—also the Rev. M. A. Reading, an Indulgence passenger.

The officers of the 33rd Battalion were : Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Patterson, D.S.O. (in command of the troops), Major C. W. J. Orr, Captains A. F. Wright, J. H. L. Bradshaw, A. J. Crosby, C. J. Dyke, J. E. C. J. Cochrane, D.S.O. (Adjutant), Lieutenants J. A. Drury-Lowe, H. C. B. Sparrow, G. F. Hodgson, J. D. Matthews, E. Thomson, F. F. J. Sullivan, C. W. Slatter, W. A. Fortesque, H. Goodwin, L. W. College, A. G. N. Henderson, A. C. Watson, R. Hartigan (Quartermaster), Captain A. F. Kennedy (Medical Officer), Lieutenants H. C. Faulkner and W. B. Anley.

Our food was fairly good and liberal in quantity, although some complaints were made that its quality might have been better. Two mess orderlies were, by a mutual arrangement, appointed to each mess for the voyage, being financially recompensed by their comrades at the journey's end. The orderlies' duties consisted of drawing the daily rations for breakfast (7 a.m.), dinner (12.30 p.m.), and tea (4 p.m.). This often necessitated a long delay in an ever-increasing queue outside the galley cook-house, bakery, or "extras" stores before the food was issued, the men frequently beguiling the time with a loud rattling of their pans, combined with audible comments on the real or fancied

unpunctuality of the cooks. Each crowded and hungry mess constantly greeted with loud ovations their respective orderlies as they appeared at the head of the gangway steps. It was often a difficult task to safely negotiate these steps with loaded hands, especially when a swell was on. With an extra roll of the boat there was great risk of the meals reaching the mess-decks before the orderlies. Indeed, upon one occasion an orderly was rather badly hurt through losing his balance, but his mess-mates, with splendid manliness, appeared more concerned for his injuries than for the scattered meal which he had been conveying to them.

Other duties performed by the orderlies were the cleaning of the pannikins, plates, etc. After breakfast all these had to be thoroughly cleansed and polished, the tables and forms scrubbed, and the platter neatly displayed for the ship's captain and the officer commanding the troops' daily inspection at 10 a.m. Prior to this daily inspection the haversacks, water-bottles, and other light articles hanging from the numerous wall pegs had to be removed and crammed out of sight among the sea-kits within the spaces provided in the cabin roof. The mess-decks were considered by the inspecting officers to present a neater appearance with the rows of bare pegs, for whenever their sharp scrutiny discovered any neglect in this matter the orderlies heard about it. But the majority of the men resented this daily promiscuous cramming among the

sea-kits of their individual stationery and nick-nacks, especially when it was done by the orderlies during the owners' temporary absence. Needless to add, after inspection these small articles were speedily restored to their former places on the pegs by their owners.

Fatigue parties were detailed for various duties during the voyage—swabbing the decks in the early mornings, scrubbing the mess-decks and gangway steps, etc. My lot fell to a scrubbing fatigue party, but fear that few of our number appreciated this task. When we reached the Tropics our work was performed barefooted. Upon one occasion, while so engaged, I lamed my foot by accidentally treading upon some broken glass, necessitating the doctor's attention and lance. But upon a troopship "duty" demands implicit obedience to orders, whether the allotted tasks be congenial or otherwise, and I trust that was the spirit which animated the majority of us.

During the daily inspection the 33rd and 34th Battalions paraded barefooted, the former on the "star-board" and the latter on the "port" side of the lower hurricane deck. Frequently much mirth was caused by the vessel rolling at most inopportune times during these parades. Many experienced great difficulty in maintaining a military bearing on a constantly shifting and inclined plane, and clung to their neighbours for support in most undignified attitudes, the rear charging

the front ranks, while the latter retaliated almost immediately by falling into the embraces of those behind. The efforts of the officers and non-coms.—while themselves constantly clinging to the deck rails—to maintain some semblance of order amid the general confusion, produced but little marked effect.

Guards and picquets were provided by the 33rd Battalion for the first part of the voyage, and later by the 34th Battalion. The upper hurricane deck was reserved for the use of officers and saloon passengers, while the yeomen had the use of the lower hurricane deck and forecastle. Forms were provided on the lower hurricane deck, which was cool and shady, especially in the tropics. The “wet” and “dry” canteens were freely patronised, and drove a brisk trade. Queues of men would patiently foregather at these long before the opening hours.

Physical drills were performed daily on the lower hurricane deck, and proved a healthful exercise, and sometimes a cause for mirth, especially if we happened to be standing upon one leg or balancing on our toes when the vessel suddenly rolled! Towards the end of the voyage a competition was held between “A,” “B,” and “C” squadrons of our battalion, the victory resting with “A” squadron.

Unfortunately, gambling was speedily in evidence on the first pay-day aboard: cards, “house-on-the-line,”

and "crown and anchor" being the chief games indulged in. With the last-mentioned pastime (?) prospective patrons were coaxed to "Roll up and back the lucky crown," or further cajoled with the assurance of "The more you puts down the more you picks up." Some wags with characteristic mimicry would respond (certainly with a greater essence of truth than the gaming-board proprietors), "The more you puts down the less you takes up." But it was distressing to see many young fellows so thoroughly absorbed in this baneful occupation. It was difficult to wend one's way along the crowded hurricane deck that night, with its groups of excited, squatting gamblers playing amid a continuous babel of noise. Two days later Colonel Roch announced—amid the applause of a number of yeomen, who, like myself, held anti-gambling views—that from that day all gambling was to cease, and anyone found so indulging, no matter who he was, would be arrested. This measure was felt by many to be a necessary one, as it had been discovered that some sharpers were aboard among the ship's crew, who had already fleeced some of the yeomen of all their money. It appeared that gangs of these sharpers were in the habit of systematically joining the crews of the South African transports with the avowed object of fleecing their victims, the latter, by the trickery of these human "sharks," being bound to lose. Picked yeomen were appointed as detectives, and thereafter any attempt at

gambling was carried on at the risk of discovery by these amateur police.

Saint Vincent, in the Cape Verde Islands, 2,350 miles from Southampton, was reached about six o'clock on the morning of May 21st. This island mainly consists of a series of hills of volcanic origin, one prominent inland peak being frequently hidden by the clouds. By the shore, at the foot of some hills which slope down to the coast, lies the town. The harbour is a natural one, and formed by a series of these irregular elevations. A lighthouse, built upon a solid rock in the centre of the bay, is a noticeable feature. The architecture of the town is partly of Spanish and partly of Hindoo bungalow style. There is an iron church for the Anglican community and some offices of shipping agents and coal merchants. A military fortress, built on a jutting rock to the extreme left of the bay, is another prominent feature, while a fair assortment of the shipping of various nationalities lay at anchor close to town.

Tugs were speedily alongside, and soon began coaling the ss. Assaye. Simultaneously our transport was surrounded by numerous small craft filled with fruit, tobacco, and small articles ornamented with shells, and for which the dusky-skinned natives, despite their exorbitant prices, found a ready sale. Their wares were drawn up the vessel's sides from the boats by means of ropes and baskets—as these merchants were

not allowed aboard—but the natives displayed a remarkable cuteness for receiving payment prior to sending their wares aloft.

Our morning parade was excused this day, perhaps wisely, judging from the slippery condition of the decks from the fast accumulating orange-peel. Most of the officers and indulgence passengers were only too glad to escape ashore from the permeating coal dust, which begrimed all who ventured upon the decks.

Although confined to the vessel all day, there was much to interest us. The weather was very warm, and most duties being suspended or few officers aboard to enforce them, we gazed indolently across the intervening sea at the town, indulged in banter and witticisms at the expense of the natives manipulating their boats and baskets, or watched with admiration the intrepid native youngsters, who skilfully climbed to the upper hurricane deck and dived from the rails into the sea for thrown coins.

Some amusement was caused during the afternoon when a party of officers and ladies, upon their return from the shore, were drenched by the sea water whilst landing at the gangway steps, through the unskilful native boatmen.

As the afternoon waned, and the sun slowly sank behind the hills, leaving them strongly silhouetted against the sky, the contour of these volcanic elevations

forming the harbour was quite weird, approaching the uncanny. They appeared as vast human-like heads, recalling the grotesque beings portrayed in Dante's "Inferno," and with a pleading expression to the heavens above. The rising moon, shedding its bright silvery beams upon these silent suppliants and the rippling sea, the twinkle of the countless stars, and the myriad lights in the town and among the black masses of the shipping, added a weird, supernatural ghostliness to the scene as we steamed away from the island.

We had left England with rumours of all kinds in the air. The Boer generals and commandants were already in conclave at Vereeniging to consider the British Government's terms for the conclusion of the war. Peace, or the continuance of hostilities, depended upon the ultimate decision of these delegates. At home the firm belief in an early prospect of peace predominated; in fact, was generally accepted as accomplished. So strongly had the belief in a peaceful solution emanating as the natural outcome of the deliberations then proceeding taken hold of a section of the British public that, while I was on furlough, prior to embarkation, the good folks of my district, hearing a premature rumour that peace had been proclaimed, immediately displayed flags and bunting from their residences, only to be ignominiously withdrawn a few hours later. But those with an intimate knowledge of the Boer characteristics had their doubts as to the ultimate issue.

Upon our arrival at Saint Vincent we manifested a not altogether unnatural eagerness to obtain some news of the war. But the only information vouchsafed was that the Boer leaders were still in conclave, although two conflicting rumours were added that the Boers had practically decided to terminate hostilities, and that they were determined to fight to the bitter end !

By this time all ranks had become accustomed to the life aboard, and although isolated from the outside world we soon realised our importance as a distinctive community. Officers and men freely fraternized, and at times distinctions of rank appeared to be momentarily forgotten, each individual instinctively realizing, in his allotted sphere, a bond of common brotherhood in our floating Utopia.

As we steamed southward the warm balmy days grew hotter. Although physical drills were continued daily, and even sports, including tugs-of-war, and boxing-bouts indulged in with a praiseworthy vigour, those of us not otherwise occupied felt usually disinclined for violent bodily exertion, much preferring to sprawl full length upon the shaded decks with the soft, cooling sea breezes blowing upon us, or choosing, if available, the most comfortable places, reading, chatting, or lost in the realms of blissful repose. Truly a lazy lot ! At the tropics the sun-exposed portions of the decks were found to be a trifle too warm as seats.

Of course, by this time superfluous clothing had long since come to be discarded, and our individual outfits consisted mainly of a shirt with rolled sleeves, trousers rolled to the knees, and no socks or shoes. Individual yeomen soon began staking their nightly claims upon the decks or in convenient sheltered nooks, possession of the "locations" being claimed by dumping the rolled hammocks upon the variously selected spots and squatting thereon by the owner or his proxy until the "retire," to ensure its non-removal. Upon one occasion, during a temporary absence I found my roll had disappeared from the mess. I felt savage, but, determined not to retire bed-less, I "commandeered" another near by, recovering my own the next night.

To lay all night upon the deck watching the stars and inhaling the deliciously cool, nocturnal breezes was such a pleasant contrast to sweltering in the hot, stuffy, crowded mess-decks below, which were generally productive of nauseous headaches. But sleeping upon the decks was not entirely free from disadvantages. To be kicked or trodden upon by a late rambler steering mess-wards was not altogether pleasant. Again, every morning, at unearthly hours and long before daylight, a rude awakening, a gruff warning, accompanied by a stream of water sweeping along the planks, as the sailors began swabbing the decks, necessitated an immediate flight, with hastily collected bedding and clothes, to drier regions.

A few nights prior to reaching Saint Vincent some fellows came rushing below, a wave having suddenly swamped the deck and the slumbering yeomen. Much grumbling ensued when an orderly officer some nights later arbitrarily forbade the men sleeping on deck.

Among the officers of the 33rd Battalion I met Lieutenant G. F. Hodgson. We had previously become acquainted at Bethlehem, in the Orange River Colony, when, as a trooper in the 62nd Company of Imperial Yeomanry, he had been seriously wounded. He invited me to his cabin, and we had several pleasant chats together about old times and acquaintances. His brother officer sharing his cabin, Lieutenant H. C. B. Sparrow, gave me a cordial greeting, and was especially solicitous for the men's comfort. Both officers expressed surprise on hearing my grievance that we were forbidden to sleep on deck at night, and intimated they would see the Commanding Officer thereon. That same night an order was issued permitting the men to sleep on deck.

To the majority the evenings were periods of leisure. Men read, or wrote their diaries in the vicinity of the electric globes, on the decks or at the mess tables, smoked (smoking was strictly prohibited excepting upon the decks), chatted and yarned—while they carefully guarded their respective hammock bundles—promenaded the decks; while others endeavoured, whenever a porthole glimpse of the saloon was possible, to

amuse themselves by feasting their eyes upon the appetising viands provided for the officers' dinners. The band of the 34th Battalion also frequently played selections at sundown.

As a diversion a very successful *al fresco* concert was organized, and the men's vocal and instrumental talent was much appreciated, the only damper being the rain.

At the officers' quarters numerous deck games were freely indulged in, the most popular being quoits and cricket, also evening *al fresco* concerts and balls—one in fancy dress—while a tug-of-war, composed of eight each side, between the clergy and military officers, resulted in a victory for the *church militant*.

On the day we left England Trooper F. Flowers, of the 153rd Company, contracted a chill that, unfortunately, soon developed into double pneumonia, and to our great regret passed away at midnight on May 23rd. He was buried at sea, at eight o'clock on the morning of the 24th, his squadron and all the officers of the 34th Battalion parading on the lower deck to do the last honours to his memory.

With the tolling of the bell the ranks nearest the gangway parted, admitting the bier covered with the Union Jack and poor Flowers's slouch hat, the *cortege* being slowly preceded by the bareheaded, robed Chaplain, who repeated in a sonorous voice those grand words of the Burial Service. A deep hush and solemnity

fell upon the whole assembly as the mortal remains of our comrade were consigned to the deep, whilst the "Last Post," played by eight buglers, concluded a very impressive ceremony.

Trooper Flowers was a farmer's son from Huntingdonshire, and after his enlistment became Major Chitty's groom.

Sunday services were held each Sabbath morning, several of the robed Chaplains officiating. Our first service was conducted on the troop mess deck occupied by the 33rd Battalion. The rendering of the anthem by the band and choir was fair, but the singing rather indistinct. Chaplain Scott-Tucker's brief but vigorous sermon was exactly suited to the spiritual needs of the troops.

Owing to the extreme hot weather, the next Sunday morning a combined service, with three congregations, was held on the upper starboard hurricane deck. It was arranged for the band to play the hymns, and so give the time to the sections, each with its own clergy. Two worked in unison, but the third started too soon, reached the first lesson before the band was well through the first hymn, and had to wait until the others caught up. The preaching by the three Chaplains proved equally unsatisfactory. The stentorian voices of the other two preachers clashed with our section, and the three commingling sermons degenerated into

disjointed and fragmentary addresses which entirely lacked cohesion.

Voluntary evening services on the poop deck were much appreciated and well attended. On the first Sunday evening the ten Chaplains attended, and we troopers were allowed individually to choose our favourite hymns. At its conclusion Colonel T. Roch, with several Welshmen, stayed behind and sang some hymns in Welsh. Their whole-hearted singing in this—to several of us—strange tongue, and rendered in perfect unison, was very impressive.

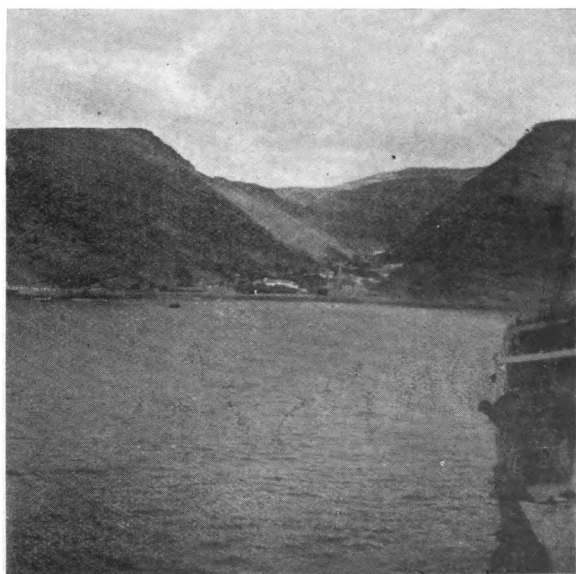
Each yeoman had to be his own "washerman," but I fear that in many cases the ultimate results of the amateurs' work would have scarcely done credit even to a second-rate laundry. Some of the ship's crew, however—for a consideration, of course—kindly relieved some of the inexperienced ones of these very necessary tasks.

The troop wash-houses were available for use only at prescribed hours, and were accordingly unduly crowded. Sea baths in a corner of the wash-house or in a canvas tank on deck, were freely patronised in the tropics. Shaving was carried on with some difficulty at the mess tables.

Early during the voyage each squadron was respectively paraded, and individual firing practice carried on from the stern at bottles and broken boxes thrown overboard.



"CROSSING THE LINE" ABOARD THE S.S. "ASSAYE."



Fire alarms were also practised. The alarms were, fortunately, always mythical outbreaks, but these calls were always obeyed with creditable promptness. Had a genuine conflagration been *en evidence* our frequent practising would doubtless have shown the beneficial effects of such training. At the sound of the alarm bell each man hurried to his respective troop at its allotted parade upon the hurricane decks, whilst the crew manned the boats and hydrants, being supported by the armed guards. After the "roll calls" the fire parades were dismissed.

"Crossing the line" was carried out with all the due observance that the time-honoured custom demanded. At four o'clock in the afternoon of May 24th, their Majesties King Neptune and his Consort, accompanied by their Court, were announced by bugle and with mock pomp and solemnity wended their way from the vicinity of the "troop" wash-house to the temporary dais erected on the lower fore-castle deck, whereon they gravely took their seats. When enthroned they formed an imposing group. Father Neptune, holding his trident, and with a grave countenance, sternly administered justice to the delinquents arraigned before him. The specially-organized constabulary, who had previously obtained permission to search all parts of the vessel, discovered many willing and unwilling victims. Wholesale arrests were made with great vigour and humour, the principal captives being taken from among

the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks. This was the men's opportunity for paying off old scores! Enthusiastic ovations of mirth and applause broke from the hundreds of spectators crowding the decks and rigging as each struggling victim was dragged forth by a posse of yeomen-police, arraigned before Neptune, and sentenced.

The punishment was in every case immediately carried out. Each prisoner was first made to swallow some insipid cold soup, then smothered with flour, daubed on the head and face with a mixture of paste and tar administered by the aid of a hard broom, forced on to an improvised seat, scraped with a gigantic wooden razor, and finally pitched backwards into the canvas bath below, where many willing hands repeatedly ducked and hosepiped their spluttering victim before releasing him. The condition of each prisoner, as he endeavoured to clear his eyes of the offensive paste and tar, can be better imagined than described.

Most of the officer-victims—many of whom were wearing their pyjamas only, although some were fully dressed—took their duckings philosophically. But one lieutenant in the 152nd Company, who had previously been singled out for especial treatment, objected strongly, and hid in a bathroom. After a long search his retreat was discovered. A roar of applause greeted his undignified appearance, while dozens of willing hands, after he had been put through the first part of

his punishment, repeatedly ducked him in the bath. He then threw himself whole-heartedly into the fun, and remained in the bath, assisting in chastising other unfortunate victims, and even seizing a favourable opportunity to "get his own back" by turning the hose upon Neptune and his Court. For this misdemeanour he was sentenced a second time for punishment.

Throughout the performance rocket guns were fired at intervals, and, after an hour's thorough enjoyment, the show terminated. Spectators were quickly dispersed by the hose, and anyone remaining ran the risk of being pushed into the bath. Indeed, even Neptune and his retinue shared this ultimate fate.

As I was busy "snapshotting" during the ceremony, I was not molested, and so escaped a ducking.

On the morning of May 28th, Saint Helena was sighted at eleven o'clock. Its first appearance suggested a mere bleak rock arising from the sea, which, however, as we hourly drew nearer, showed some signs of life and fertility. Many clouds throwing vast shifting shadows across the island gave it a forest-like appearance.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we anchored outside Jamestown, a little town lying on the northern side of the island and snugly ensconced in a natural cleft running inland. With the exception of some foliage in this aperture, the island, as a whole, presented a very

bleak aspect. The fort, built on the bold eminence overlooking the town—reached by a succession of 699 steps, called “Jacob’s ladder”—which dominates the whole island, gave to the place an appearance of impregnable strength and stolidity. This security was further enhanced by the presence of the two war vessels, H.M.S. Hawk and Dwarf.

We learnt that the ss. Plassy, with the 32nd Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry on board, that had sailed from Southampton on May 10th, had broken down during the voyage out, and only left Saint Helena on the previous day.

But concerning the war we gathered but little information. The Boer delegates at Vereeniging were still deliberating the question of peace or continuing hostilities, and many yeomen, despite rumours to the contrary, anticipated seeing some “active service.”

We dropped several passengers at the island, including a number of women—wives who were rejoining their husbands in the garrison—and weighed anchor at six o’clock in the evening. Cheers were exchanged between the sailors aboard H.M.S. Hawk and ourselves as we steamed past.

While at Aldershot the Religious Tract Society had kindly sent me a large parcel of literature for distribution, which was gladly appreciated by the yeomen. The

senior Chaplain also periodically distributed publications supplied by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Our floating and distinctive community was considered incomplete without the presence of a newspaper. Accordingly the *Assaye Chronicle* made its *début* on May 16th, and reappeared on May 19th, 22nd, 26th, 29th, and June 2nd respectively, when its brief career terminated. It was a four-paged journal, thirteen inches by eight, the editorial handwriting being reproduced by a "graph" machine. It was retailed at the modest sum of 6d., and the extremely limited supply of the first issue was eagerly purchased. A few remaining copies were auctioned, and some realized as much as 3s. 9d. apiece. The demand for copies was so great that a reprint was issued of the first two numbers.

Each issue commenced with an editorial and notes on the voyage. The other subjects were generally classified under the following category :—" Mileage of ship's daily run," " Poetry," " Riddles," " Answers to Riddles," " Double Acrostics," " Correspondence," " Answers to Correspondence," " Ecclesiastical Notes " (times of Sunday services, etc.), " Military Notes," essays on various topics, and jokes at the expense of individual officers and yeomen, etc. In the later editions appeared some very creditable sketches of Saint Helena and scenes aboard.

Subjoined are a few extracts, chiefly humorous, culled from the six issues :—

“ It has been a subject of much comment that the 34th Band, which performed so ably on embarkation, has not since been *en evidence*. Is it due to overstrain? Or to the force of natural laws and the uncertainty of gravitation?”

* * * * *

Novice : “ No, leaning over the bulwarks is certainly not ornamental in rough weather; but it has its advantages.”

* * * * *

Essay on Mal-de-mer.—“ Sea-sickness is not a happy even if it is a useful invention. No one yearns after it, though many strain for it. One could easily do without such a thing, but one seldom gets time enough to go so far. Some merely turn their faces to a handy vessel, ‘ pail ’ faces undoubtedly. Others find it convenient to study with concentrated interest the mysterious secrets of the ocean’s vasty depths, perhaps with philanthropic designs towards the finny denizens.

“ Sea sickness engenders the faculty of snare and subtle deception. If a lady recollects she has left her purse lying about in her cabin, we may consider the suggestion as a figure of speech. If a man is suddenly curious as to his friend’s whereabouts, be sure he is far less concerned for his friend than his enemy.

“A walk round the decks after lunch will provide much food for reflection on this fruitful theme!!”

* * * * *

“Sitting on broken chairs is not to be classed as a pastime, although it affords an unlimited amount of merriment to numerous onlookers.”

* * * * *

Yeomen's Concert.—“Last Saturday the Yeomen had a very successful concert in the fore part of the ship, which was much appreciated. The best items were Michael Wynne's ‘Dublin Fusiliers’—sung with concentrated passion—and a valiant recital entitled, ‘Your colours are at the top.’

“One or two songs would have been better if slightly censored; and we heard a Yeoman say that the singer deserved to be put in the padded room. Unfortunately, he is there at this moment, but for a different reason.

“The rain was very trying to us all.”

* * * * *

“One of our lady voyagers has been appointed drill instructor to the officers of the 33rd and 34th Battalions, I.Y. Happy officers.”

* * * * *

Child, to its mother during the ship's progress

through the Bay of Biscay : " Ma, dear, is not this ship very badly balanced?"

* * * * *

Epitaph.—" Underneath these marble stones,
Lie the bones of Mary Jones,
Her name was Brown, the name of Jones
Was used because it rhymes with
stones."

* * * * *

" It is said that the Assaye Troopers are in a very uncomfortable position. Is this because they are between their officers and the deep sea? "

* * * * *

On dit.—" Love is a kind of itching which passes if not brought to the scratch."

* * * * *

Officer : " Why are you going to South Africa?"

Yeoman : " For a bit of a rest, sir."

Officer : " Rest! What sort of rest?"

Yeoman : " You don't know my wife, sir, or you wouldn't ask the question."

* * * * *

Three Great Nations.—" British nation, Vaccination, Coronation."

"Don't attempt to go outside the township walls for a walk, or you might get wet. Take your exercise on board."

* * * * *

"What did the Assaye?" "Trot her out."

* * * * *

The last paragraph in the final number of the *Assaye Chronicle* concluded as follows:—

"To our friends in the dear Homeland.—It needs no assurance by means of a newspaper that amid the storm and stress in far off places our hearts are ever turning to the 'Land of our fathers'; yet the editors cannot conclude this sheet without recording, for the additional satisfaction of all who have relatives in 'Assaye,' that never a day nor an hour goes by without some manifestation that 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder.' It may be a message sent by a lad in hospital to his mother, or perhaps only a glance at a baby's photograph; but we know that homes and absent friends are never far away."

* * * * *

In the evening of June 2nd we anchored in Table Bay. Away on our starboard the myriad scintillating lights of Cape Town engrossed everyone's attention. It afforded me some inward amusement to listen to the very diverse speculations, from the yeomen gazing shorewards, of

the town and its general surroundings. Evidently some among them must have divined my thoughts, for I was constantly being appealed to—as an old campaigner, I suppose, and therefore an authority—to settle the knotty points in their arguments.

Rough weather had been encountered during the day's sailing, afflicting some with a return of *mal-de-mer*, the rolling of the vessel causing the tin pannikins in the messes to scatter in all directions, while the upsetting of the scalding contents of two tea cans just brought from the galley added its quota to the general confusion.

Before daybreak the following morning we were busy checking and handing in our hammocks and blankets, amid much noise and confusion, in anticipation of an early disembarkation. Then followed a period of further din and confusion, intermingled with not a little strong language as the kits and equipment were being individually overhauled upon the crowded mess tables. Several of us were unable to obtain a wash. After almost fighting for it, we managed to partake of a few mouthfuls of breakfast, but amid much discomfort.

At dawn, as the sun slowly dispelled the land mists, Cape Town, the adjacent country and Table Mountain gradually became visible. The town, nestling at the foot of the mountain, with its mercantile shipping of all nations in the bay, and commodious docks, betokens a place of some commercial and geographical importance.

No definite order appeared to have been issued respecting our disembarkation, but nevertheless we all donned our equipments and took our kits on deck. Each person mounted guard over his respective possessions by squatting upon them, gazing at the passing craft, and summarizing as to the next move.

Two transports, crowded with kharki-clad soldiery for England, were anchored close by, but just too far for conversation. Passing craft were constantly plied with multifarious interrogatives. One extra-communicative boatman informed us that the war was over, "Peace" having been declared on the previous Saturday (May 31st). This important piece of news was received with doubt by many.

We also ascertained that the 32nd Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry were then quartered at Green Point camp.

Our vessel docked at noon, and much interest was evinced at the various types of shipping in dock; also the Cape boys, Kaffirs, and coolie dockers. Our officers being ashore all day, we remained in a state of indifferent uncertainty until the afternoon, when we returned our kits to our messes and drew fresh hammocks for the night. We were not altogether sorry, as sitting upon our baggage for so long was both irksome and uncomfortable.

I had made my bed on the floor at the foot of the

gangway stairs, and was comfortably dozing off when an unsteady yeoman, who had managed, by some means, to imbibe not wisely but too well, stumbled and fell on top of me. This was too much. I fairly lost my temper, and instantly sprang to my feet. Probably there would have been a scene, as I felt full of fight, but a corporal and several men, apparently anticipating trouble, ran forward and dragged the offender to his own mess.

Our destination being Newcastle, in Natal, our vessel left on the following morning. At the morning parade the senior Chaplain read to the troops from a Cape newspaper an account of the Boers' final surrender and acceptance of the British terms; and the consequent "Peace" rejoicings. Also, amid great applause, that in commemoration of the event Lord Kitchener had directed that the profits accruing from the "Field Force Canteen"—about £18,000—were to be distributed in goods from the canteen to the value of one shilling and sixpence per man, to every soldier then serving in South Africa.*

In a choppy sea we steamed along the coast all day. The coastline presented a wild, rugged, and in many places a precipitous surface, but with a marvellous grandeur which harmonized with its wild abandonment.

*Our Yeomanry battalion not being in South Africa at the proclamation of Peace, we did not receive this gift.

The south-eastern coast of the Continent, stretching away north-eastwards from the Cape of Good Hope, gradually developed into chalky cliffs and verdant pasture lands, and beautiful landscape scenery, intersected with rivulets, chines, and deep-set creeks. These were occasionally diversified by bold, lofty bluffs, spreading forests and small townships.

At an early hour on June 7th we reached Durban, and anchored off the coast.

The log of the ss. Assaye during the voyage from Southampton to Cape Town (May 14th to June 2nd, 1902) :—

Date.	Daily run. Miles.	Latitude	Longitude.
May 15th	303	47° 34' N.	6° 51' W.
„ 16th	354	42° 12' N.	10° 19' W.
„ 17th	363	36° 45' N.	13° 43' W.
„ 18th	365	31° 10' N.	16° 39' W.
„ 19th	360	25° 50' N.	19° 48' W.
„ 20th	360	20° 34' N.	22° 57' W.
„ 21st	245	(St. Vincent)	
„ 22nd	211	13° 32' N.	24° 32' W.
„ 23rd	340	8° 47' N.	21° 22' W.
„ 24th	355	3° 57' N.	17° 56' W.
„ 25th	345	0° 52' S.	14° 48' W.
„ 26th	329	5° 32' S.	11° 57' W.
„ 27th	340	10° 30' S.	9° 11' W.
„ 28th	344	15° 25' S.	6° 9' W.
„ 28th	36	(St. Helena)	
„ 29th	250	18° 34' S.	2° 23' W.
„ 30th	337	22° 10' S.	2° 12' E.
„ 31st	336	25° 41' S.	6° 58' E.
June 1st	343	29° 14' S.	12° 1' E.
„ 2nd	326	33° 2' S.	16° 35' E.
„ 2nd	108	(to Cape Town).	

Total mileage 6,350

CHAPTER III.

AT NEWCASTLE AND UMBANA.

Shortly after nine in the morning both battalions paraded in full marching order and carrying their kits, preparatory to an early transference into the tugs waiting alongside. Although somewhat crowded in these small craft we managed, in spite of the limited space, to obtain glimpses of the fine stretch of Durban beach, which extends northwards, as we were being rapidly conveyed shorewards. Having crossed the "bar" at the entrance of the harbour, we steamed past the breakwater and up the narrow channel, which was protected on the south by "the Bluff"—a bold headland surmounted by a lighthouse. Entering the larger basin, the quay was soon reached, where we rapidly disembarked, despite the very warm weather.

During the remainder of the forenoon and part of the afternoon, the resultant bustle and confusion presented an animated scene. The two battalions "fell in," roll calls were taken; we "stood easy" till everyone grew restless and weary; and "filed up" and drew our dinner rations at a restaurant cook-house situated on the quay. Several took early opportunities of supplementing—at their own personal risk and expense—this meal with more palatable repasts from a convenient refreshment room. Officers and non-coms. were con-

tinually hurrying about, harassed with complicated orders which were frequently countermanded.

Great interest was taken in the numerous Cape boys, half-castes, Zulus, Kaffirs, and Hindoo coolies, many of whom swarmed around us for what they could get. Also, in the Zulu "rickshaw boys," gaily costumed in their loose, white cotton coats and breeches trimmed with gaudy knee rosettes and long flowing streamers, and horned head-dress or feathers, and who were dashing hither and thither with their human fares.

We entrained on the quay during the afternoon and sorted out our surplus kit, which we had been instructed we were to leave later at Pietermaritzburg. Accordingly, much of the baggage was individually discarded and quickly appropriated by the eager natives crowding around.

Durban was left at five o'clock in the afternoon, amid a scene of some animation upon the part of the populace who had foregathered to witness our departure. Indeed, the natives were exceedingly demonstrative, yelling, gesticulating, cutting amusing capers, making fantastic evolutions in their inherent impetuosity and excitement, and giving vent to various other ebullitions. The rickshaw boys, trailing their hand-drawn vehicles, ran with long strides and indulged in various grotesque manœuvres. One fat old native pointed significantly towards the prison, and indulged in a very broad grin

at his own joke. The Colonials accorded us a hearty send-off, but in a less demonstrative and more dignified manner. Intuitively these demonstrations made us realise, with perhaps a keener perception, that we were rapidly nearing the scene of our labours on behalf of which the country had appealed for our patriotic and voluntary service. Peace had certainly been proclaimed, but might there not still exist opportunities of seeing some active service? Were there not yet possibilities of meeting with recalcitrant Boers? Who could predict what chances the future might hold for us? And so we travelled, buoyed up with ardent hopes and anticipations.

Sunset and darkness fell rapidly, blotting out much of the surrounding country, but the flying sparks from our locomotive were constantly igniting the dried-up grass and shrubbery, these conflagrations lighting up the immediate landscape with a strangely ghostlike and fantastic flicker.

At Pinetown Bridge, through the darkness, were visible the dim outlines of the tents and buildings of "Number 13," Stationary Hospital; also the terra cotta works on the opposite side of the line belching forth, as usual, its smoke and flame. Only four months previously, with some of my former Volunteer chums, we had quitted this hospital for home. I wondered if any of my comrades who remained behind—and

whom I had last seen at this station—were still there.

By an oversight the carriage lights were not switched on, our only illuminants being a few flickering candles. To the ten men allotted to each compartment, the prospect of comfortably settling down for the night presented some difficulties. Crowded together in a sitting posture, and without blankets, was scarcely compatible with comfort, warmth and sweet, refreshing sleep.

Pietermaritzburg was reached at one o'clock the next morning. Here we were aroused and our surplus kits deposited, being consigned to the care of a corporal and two men from our battalion, who had previously received instructions to transfer them to the military stores in the town. Although we each handed over two bags as ordered, I took good care to leave very little inside mine, having a strong presentiment that I might possibly not see their contents again. This predilection was fully justified, as subsequent events clearly proved. But that is anticipating. However, in packing I had contrived successfully to cram the greater part of the contents of my three kit-bags into the one I took with me. My chums were not so fortunate, and some regretted later that they had not followed my example. It is marvellous what a quantity of stuff can be crammed into a bag by those who have learned the art. Inverting a well-known adage, it is "Making a lot go a little way." Of course, this only

applies to the sterner sex. With the opposite sex such promiscuous "squeezing" would mean irretrievable disaster. I recall a little story which is worth recounting. A young married couple were actively preparing for their first summer vacation. The juvenile "hubby" found his "better half" vainly struggling with, and bewailing, amid tears, her inability to make her "modest" wardrobe fit into the inadequate trunk. Being of a practical, as well as a sympathetic nature, he soon allayed her misgivings by promptly taking over the entire management, and commenced repacking on his own initiative. Blouses, frills, furbelows, and other dainty feminine garments and nick-nacks were rolled and compactly squeezed into every likely and unlikely nook and corner. In a very short while, under dear hubby's "cleverness," the obstinate trunk was duly packed and fastened. Then wet eyes were dried, kisses and more squeezes (human ones this time) followed, and tears gave way to smiles. All went well until the destination was reached. Then, when the trunk was opened, the blouses, frills, etc., etc., were found to be—but why continue so painful a subject?

Mooi River was reached at daybreak. May, June and July are the winter months in South Africa. Being mid-winter, there was a thick ground-frost, and the cold, crisp air soon compelled us to move about briskly, thereby introducing some warmth to our bodies, which had become stiff and benumbed after our long and

cramped position in the train. But the sun's warm, penetrating rays soon tempered this chilly atmosphere, enabling us to enjoy the scenery with a greater degree of comfort.

During a halt at Willow Grange, a Hindoo hut near by aroused much curiosity. Presently a yeoman, whose innate inquisitiveness had led him into the interior, re-appeared nursing a Hindoo infant, which made an exceedingly unique group for the ubiquitous snap-shotter.

Natal, south of the Tugela, advances by grades, from a sub-tropical climate around Durban and the coast, with its forest-lands and profuse foliage, to the higher and bleaker veld-land in the interior.

For the first few miles of the journey up-country the railway conforms to the contours of the undulating landscape, winding with innumerable curves around the kopjes, amid a mass of foliage, fir and blue gum trees. In places the scenery was very typical of that seen in Scotland.

As we proceeded northwards the graves of the poor soldier lads, who had fallen in the war, were promiscuously dotted over the veld, singly or in little groups, like so many miniature cemeteries, each tomb being surmounted by a headstone or small wooden cross. Nearer Colenso, and upon the site of the never-to-be-forgotten Tugela battlefields, they were clustered to-

gether more thickly. Brave fellows, who had fought valorously for the dear old flag, and nobly laid down their lives to uphold the honour and prestige of their Queen and Empire!

Close to Colenso a large, conspicuous, black obelisk marked the last earthly resting-place of Lieutenant F. Roberts—the brave son of a truly noble father—who sacrificed his life in the heroic but futile effort to save the guns. Close by a “file” of eleven whitened stones denoted where the guns were lost, and which Lieutenant Roberts strove so hard to save.

As we crossed the bridge spanning the river, climbed slowly up the Tugela valley, gazed out upon the several battlefield monuments and thickly-clustered graves—which silently, yet withal so graphically denoted many a hard-fought contest—and saw the towering and precipitous kopjes, we began, but somewhat inadequately, it must be confessed, to comprehend the innumerable and stupendous difficulties encountered by General Buller in his attempts to force his way through a hostile army holding this mountain region, to the relief of that besieged garrison in Ladysmith. The sight of these monuments of “duty” nobly done could not do otherwise than produce a decidedly sobering effect upon our hitherto hilarious buoyancy.

Having traversed this historical mountainous region we passed near Isambulwana, which towered upon our

right—one of the positions from which the Boers had shelled Ladysmith. From this point the veld stretched away in an open expanse towards the town, which we reached at noon.

During the brief halt we received our dinner ration, re-filled our water-bottles, and indulged in our deferred morning ablutions.

Farther on more clustered graves and obelisks at the ridge of Elaands Laagte and the Glencoe heights denoted other hard-fought contests. During a halt at Dundee the whole battalion invaded the refreshment rooms, practically denuding them of supplies.

The country through which we were now travelling assumed a wild and rugged grandeur. Huge kopjes, irregular, conical and table-shaped, intersected with passes or “neks,” lay in all directions; here and there narrow gorges with half-dry spruits tracing their own paths amid the rocks and across the veld. Between these ranges the dry, brown veld stretched away like forsaken wildernesses, whilst ever and anon farmsteads appeared as oases in the desert.

Darkness had fallen when we reached Newcastle—our destination—and we were shunted on a siding for the remainder of the night. Shortly afterwards our attention was attracted by a rapidly approaching train from the south. There was a confused roar from the loco-

motive vomiting clouds of smoke and steam, a sudden blurr of brightly lit carriages, from within which we faintly distinguished the shouting and gesticulating outlines of the men of the 33rd Battalion, on their way to Volksrust. That was the last we saw of them for several months.

Our second night was no improvement upon the first, as we experienced all the discomforts of the previous one. Some lay upon the carriage floor, but my chum, L. J. Torkington, and I strongly protested when a yeoman desired to roost in the luggage rack just over our heads, as we naturally dreaded being made the recipients of a sudden descent during his slumbers. Our objections were derisively received by others in the carriage, but these apprehensions were not entirely unfounded. About midnight we were aroused by fearful yells, accompanied by a noisy commotion, in the next compartment. A stout yeoman, while slumbering in his elevated couch, had fallen upon his sleeping comrades below with results that can be better imagined than described!

On the following day—June 9th—our battalion was allotted its camping ground, close to the railway, on the south side of the town. The camp was laid out in the four squadron lines, with the officers' quarters aligned transversely at one end and the quarter-master's stores at the other. Near the latter were also estab-

lished the "orderly" and "guard" tents*, water carts, and cooks' open-air kitchens.

Several "detail" troops were garrisoned at Newcastle: Regulars, Australian and Canadian Irregulars and Yeomanry. Some of these latter had been with Lord Methuen in his last disastrous fight with De La Rey. To my surprise I also found the remains of the 34th Company, who had suffered so severely at Tweefontein the previous Christmas morning. Our recognition was mutual, especially with one man who had been an inmate of the military hospital at Bethlehem a year before. It was pleasant to be constantly meeting old comrades.

Although peace had been proclaimed, the outposts still manned the blockhouses encircling the town, and mounted men were constantly patrolling the veld beyond these forts. Vague rumours had reached us of attacks by small parties of Boers still being made upon isolated outposts; also that at one blockhouse—fourteen miles distant—an officer and two men had been killed by the snipers. From these unofficial accounts we wondered whether, after all, there was still a possibility of our experiencing some fighting.

As our camp was located upon a somewhat elevated ground a fairly good survey of the prominent features

*These tents were not erected until a few days later.

of the surrounding country could be readily obtained. To the north rose great mountainous ranges like impassable barriers, with several sugar-loaf shaped peaks prominently appearing above the general contour of the table-shaped mass of kopjes. These heights comprised the northern part of the Drakensbergs, which enclosed the triangular-shaped frontier between northern Natal, Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal. The Boers mounted their long-range guns upon these heights when they shelled Newcastle at the beginning of the war.

Across a stretch of several miles of undulating veld another arm of this range could be seen melting away in a shimmering azure haze to the east, in the direction of Utrecht. To the south the country was more open, with the exception of two isolated kopjes which stood apart like grim sentinels guarding the railway track.

Newcastle presented the characteristic features typical of Colonial towns; its broad, principal thoroughfare (Scott Street) containing the usual assortment of stores and business premises; its scattered dwellings of the bungalow type; corrugated iron shanties and Hindoo settlements spread promiscuously over a fairly large area, and the less important roads bisecting or running parallel with the main artery. The town hall is the most prominent building—a large stone edifice, occupying a conspicuous position in Scott Street. General Joubert and his military staff made this building their

head-quarters when the Boer forces occupied the town on the British evacuation in 1899. Upon the British re-occupation the Boer prisoners were kept within the town hall, whilst our troops bivouacked on the steps and alongside the exterior walls.

Several of the town buildings were being utilised by the military authorities as staff offices and commissariat stores. Close to the cemetery and alongside the railway, a large military hospital had been established. There was also a Soldier's Institute containing a combined refreshment and recreation room. The Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Churches possessed their respective buildings.

Although the Hindoo population was strongly represented, as evidenced by their numerous stores and bazaars, many of the better-class shops were run by Colonials, from whom most articles could be obtained, but at rather exorbitant figures as compared with English prices.

After planning out our camp, minus the tents which had not arrived, we spent the remainder of the day according to individual tastes. Some bathed in a pond close by, which was found to be decidedly refreshing but the water icy cold. One yeoman was troubled with a blistered foot. He was particularly desirous of ascertaining from me how men, in similar predicaments during the war, contrived to allay their soreness. When

informed that they often sought relief by removing the boot and binding up the chafed foot with a puttie, he took my hint and presently re-appeared hobbling along with a huge puttie bandage adorning his extremity. As he did not entirely appreciate the chorus of uncomplimentary remarks which his ungainly appearance naturally evoked, he again sought my advice. Somewhat irritated, I sarcastically advised him to remove the inequality of his offending foot and treat the other in a similar manner, and he was simple-minded enough to do so!

Each man having received three blankets and one waterproof ground-sheet, several fellows thereupon erected bivouacs. These were triangular-shaped shelters, each one just large enough to comfortably hold two persons in a recumbent position—and formed by a couple of blankets stretched over a framework composed of upright rifle supports held rigid by gun slings, coat straps and string, the blanket walls being pegged down tautly by bayonets and odd pieces of wood. The domicile was completed by arranging the two ground-sheets—overlapping down the centre—upon the earth floor within. Ensconced under the bivouac and comfortably wrapped in their cavalry cloaks and remaining blankets, with the kitbags as pillows, the occupants were screened from the extremes of temperature and unpropitious elements, especially at night-time.

With my comrade Torkington, we two preferred

sleeping together in the open, drinking in the exhilarating, fresh air of the veld, and with the expansive canopy of the heavens, with their myriad scintillating points of light, as our roof. Lying snugly among my three thick blankets, and gazing up at the heavenly constellations overhead, my reflections dwelt mainly on the previous campaign experiences, strongly contrasting my warmth and comfort with the former cold and discomfort, when many of the poor fellows of our division, terribly weakened in physique by their awful hardships and privations, had often passed the greater part of those bitter, cold nights shivering beneath the one blanket allotted to each man.

Reveill  was at six o'clock. After our sound and comfortable sleep it was amusing to hear the "grousing" (grumbling) of several yeomen respecting the hardness of their veld beds. "Roughing it" is certainly the best panacea for flabby males that I know of!

Our arrival at Newcastle was the cause of a great amount of speculation with us as to our ultimate destination. Instinctively we felt convinced that Newcastle was to be our battalion's headquarters—the centre from which we should operate. Patrolling and trekking through certain localities would, we felt sure, be the principal duties devolving upon us. But whither? As the authorities maintained a sphinx-like

reticence in the matter, our speculative theorising seconded by divers rumours, evolved the wildest and most contradictory solutions.

At this time the Boers were coming in to surrender, though it was uncertain whether they would all do so. There were rumours of recalcitrant commandoes, but they turned out to be groundless.

Upon our arrival at Newcastle the 34th Battalion was ordered to take over the outposts at Umbana and Konigsberg—relieving Colonel Firman's 11th Battalion of Yeomanry who had hitherto been garrisoning these forts. Three troops of the 152nd Company ("B" Squadron), under Captain Fothergill, were detailed for duty at Konigsberg, a blockhouse close to the Drakensbergs, some ten miles west of Newcastle; "A" and "B" troops of the 151st Company ("A" Squadron) at Umbana blockhouse on Middlesex kopje, situated ten miles on the Newcastle-Utrecht road.

Our remounts and saddlery were drawn from the 11th Battalion on this day (June 10th), the horse-lines were measured and marked out in each respective squadron, and the animals picketed thereon.

During the afternoon some excitement was caused by sparks from a passing train igniting the dried veld grass, which, fanned by a strong, favourable breeze, rapidly swept towards our camp. Every man available

turned out, and for some considerable time beat the flames with their blankets before the conflagration was extinguished.

Our first mail was also received this day, and its contents devoured with avidity by the fortunate recipients. One only needs to be similarly placed to appreciate adequately the joy or pathos that news from the dear ones in the old homeland invariably produces.

The sky had been rather overcast and the temperature cold during the day. Towards evening, huge, ominous clouds, billowing from over the mountains on the north, betokened an approaching storm. By this time most of the men had completed their bivouacs, but Torkington and myself—through continual interruptions—had only partially erected ours when darkness suddenly fell upon us, accompanied by huge drops of rain. As it was almost impossible to complete our improvised tent without getting soaked into the bargain, we gladly abandoned our half-finished shelter to avail ourselves of the generous offer of two yeomen to share their bivouac with them. During the night a terrific thunderstorm broke over the camp, and although the four of us were rather cramped, we preferred this minor discomfort to getting soaked. At least the two visitors kept dry, but our two hospitable friends got swamped on their side.

The weather continued showery during the morning,

but by noon had cleared somewhat, and our sodden blankets and kits were dried during the brief intervals of sunshine. No time was lost in completing our partially-erected bivouac as a cold, cutting wind had sprung up and was blowing with great force and keenness from the mountains. It continued with Arctic severity throughout the night, and although we were fully dressed—including our cloaks—and rolled in our blankets, we felt quite starved with the cold as we huddled together for warmth. The bitter wind increased to a gale, and seemed to penetrate every vestige of covering we possessed, and to freeze the very marrow in our bones. Dame Slumber refused to be wooed as we lay with chattering teeth and freezing limbs, indulging in recriminations and imprecations upon the unkind elements. Amid the shriek of the gale we could only faintly distinguish the growls and muttered invectives of the yeomen as bivouac after bivouac, unable to withstand longer this fierce bombardment, were bodily uprooted and the occupants buried amid the débris.

About two o'clock in the morning one side of our bivouac was uprooted, but the remaining half, although the most exposed surface and broadside on to the fury of the storm, successfully stood the strain. After vainly struggling, in the teeth of the gale, to peg down the furiously flapping blanket edges which lashed our faces with stinging force, we finally abandoned the

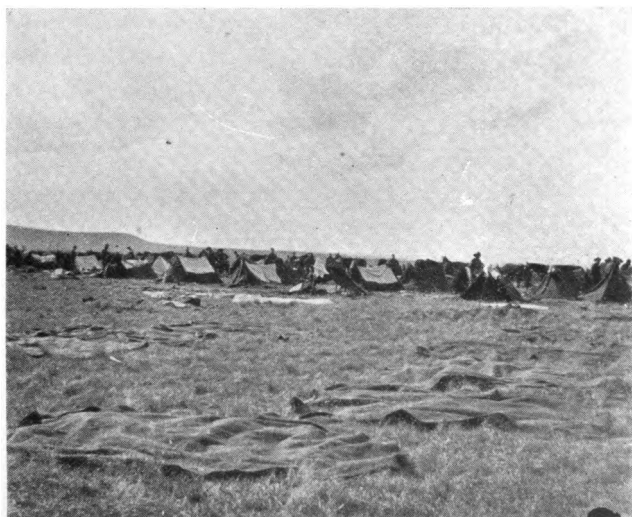
attempt and endeavoured to gain some shelter and warmth by snuggling close together under our partial covering. But being nearest to this blanket wall I caught the full force of the icy blast, which rapidly permeated through the taut fabric, and vaguely wondered if I should ever know warmth again. With a slightly altered rendering of a well-known proverb, we realised that "Half a bivouac was better than *no* bed."

On first "turning in" I had taken off my boots, but was glad enough when, after groping about for awhile, one was found and slipped on again, although it cramped and pinched my foot terribly. In the morning the cause was ascertained—the boot was on the wrong foot!

At reveillé the camp presented a scene of disorder. Evidences of the havoc caused by the storm were abundantly apparent. Half the bivouacs had collapsed, in many cases the occupants being buried beneath the débris. Recognising the futility of attempting to re-erect them in the teeth of the gale, they had simply lain beneath until the morning. Our sergeant-major, whose shelter had collapsed shortly after midnight, had passed his lonely vigil tramping up and down the lines until daybreak, in an endeavour to keep warm. The poor horses, protected from the storm's fury only by a rug, were in a pitiable condition—shivering and half-frozen. All around the ground was frozen



SCOTT STREET, NEWCASTLE.



THE MORNING AFTER THE STORM.

PLATE IV.

hard, and the mountain tops were covered with snow.

With sunrise our conditions were improved. The keen wind dropped, the air grew warmer, and we were soon laughing over our misfortunes of the previous night. A few hours later we were elated by the arrival of our tents, which were speedily erected.

Our remounts were branded and assigned to the officers and men. The grotesque capers of the horses as they felt the hot branding-iron upon their flanks certainly caused us some merriment, but must have been rather a painful operation to the poor beasts.

On Sunday morning (June 15th) a church parade—at which the other Yeomanry Battalions in Newcastle attended—was held at a convenient spot near the camp, every man being fully armed. A very straightforward address on “Temptation” was delivered by the officiating Chaplain, the service concluding with the Benediction and the National Anthem.

“A” and “B” troops of the 151st Company having been detailed for duty at Umbana blockhouse, under Lieutenants Ritchie and De Rees, we were astir at an early hour on the following morning, making our final preparations, and taking our departure soon after seven o’clock. Our baggage, equipment and stores were conveyed on two “general service” (Army) waggons.

A few brief remarks anent the road vehicles commonly used in South Africa will convey some general idea of the usual mode of transport on the veld. The most common type is the ox-waggon—a long, low,

cumbersome structure drawn by eight span of oxen. Many are fitted with a light, convex wooden frame and canvas roof, which affords shelter from the sun and rain to the passengers. A native driver and a leader accompany each waggon. These unremittingly urge forward their respective teams with their long, stinging, cracking whips and interminable yak yaks, and other apparently unintelligible jargon. The general service waggon, more extensively used by the troops, is a smaller and lighter vehicle, without the hood-like shelter, and drawn by a team of mules. A perfect understanding appears to exist between the natives and the oxen and mules under their care. The natives assign to each animal a name, and the oxen and mules readily obey their black masters. Sometimes the drivers and leaders urge their respective teams to greater efforts by running alongside, beating and shouting at them, or, by way of diversion, throwing pieces of "mist" at the laggards.

At the commencement of our journey some of our transport animals proved rather refractory, and manifested an obstinate tendency to proceed backwards, sideways, or in any other direction but the right one. Probably as it was our first trek, this also, in a measure, accounted for our manifesting some awkwardness in the saddle, for, after proceeding a few miles, we began to feel the weight of the ammunition in our bandoliers (each man carried 150 rounds of small arm ammunition) and our accoutrements.

Leaving Newcastle, and following the road around the base of the eastern spur of the mountain range, before us lay several miles of monotonous, flat, scrubby veld-land. But on our left, in the direction of Charlestown and Volksrust, the landscape was flanked by huge mountainous ranges, their giant peaks towering heavenwards in all the majesty of their silent grandeur and strength—a pleasant contrast to the bare and open country over which we were travelling. Dongas and spruits frequently intersected our road, while Kaffir kraals promiscuously dotted the landscape.

Roads on the South African veld are usually mere beaten tracks, worn in the process of time into some semblance of a roadway by the passage of animals and waggons. Sometimes they are mere narrow pathways, in other cases broadened roads. These roadways are constantly throwing out fresh offshoots, which, after running for varying distances on their own initiative, rejoin the main arteries or are lost on the veld. There are few bridges, and the tracks are, therefore, continued across the rivers and spruits. In many such places the sides of the river banks have been cut down to facilitate the descent of the waggons to the river bed and their passage across. During the dry weather the river beds contain little or no water, but in the rainy season they speedily develop into rushing, roaring torrents, when it is well-nigh impossible to ford them. Despite the skilful handling of the native drivers, accidents are frequent when negotiating the

steep slopes on the bank, as the transport animals are apt to grow unruly and get out of hand while descending or ascending the sodden, slippery declivities.

Throughout South Africa the Kaffirs are the most numerous race of natives to be seen. They are muscular, well-proportioned, black-skinned and contented, although manifesting a somewhat servile disposition in their relation to the white man. Despite their usually cheerful appearance, their features are not exactly attractive. The women-folk are decidedly less handsome than the men, but a redeeming feature of both the males and females is their splendid, pearly-white teeth. Both sexes are fond of profusely adorning themselves with a variety of ornaments, principally of string beads around their necks, and iron and copper bracelets worn upon their limbs. The men are clothed in semi-civilized costumes, which can be defined as principally skins, with perhaps a European garment added thereto. Usually the women wear a kind of petticoat made of leather, and a long blanket wound around them as a mantle.

Although the men and the "boys" attend to the cattle, the women are the household drudges, judging by the industry they displayed as compared to the usually easy-going, indolent lives of the males. The "gentle sex" also manufacture the earthen cooking-pots and calabashes, and build the huts or kraals, which are spherical and like immense beehives, being built up of long, green sticks bent into this peculiar shape and

covered with rush matting. During these operations the men usually smoke and gaze nonchalantly upon the female handiwork, doubtless with a view to supervise and satisfy themselves that the work is properly done. Kaffir corn, commonly known as mealies, is extensively cultivated by them. When ground it makes an excellent flour or porridge. Their native beverage, named "jyola" of Kaffir beer, is prepared by fermentation from this corn, and tastes not unlike sweetened milk.

Nine miles from Newcastle we reached the bridge spanning the Buffalo river, on the Transvaal border, which was protected by sandbags and defended by a detachment of Munster Fusiliers. We were informed that the Boers had refrained from destroying this bridge as they had contributed to the cost of its erection prior to the war. If true, obviously a wise precaution upon their part!

The blockhouse stood on the summit of Middlesex kopje, distant about half a mile from the river, and reached by a gradual slope from the bridge. This belonged to the larger type of well-built, stone blockhouses—which are scattered throughout the country at strategical points and in the proximity of the towns—and strongly resembled a railway signal-box. It was surrounded by a circular courtyard, the outer walls or ramparts being built up of corrugated iron sheeting, strengthened with sods and sandbags conveniently arranged to form embrasures or loopholes, the latter being about four feet from the inner ground surface.

Within this enclosure was contained the telegraph and heliograph station communicating with Newcastle; also the quarter-master's stores, canteen, officers' mess, water tanks, and a vaulting horse and parallel bars for the use of those who were gymnastically inclined. Upon the lower terrace, encircled by a double row of barbed-wire entanglements, were the men's tents, cook-houses and horse lines. A specially constructed horse shelter had been built upon a third terrace lower down the slope, but we only used it for a few days. The blockhouse was manned by a detachment of the Munster Fusiliers, under Lieutenant West; and some of the *11th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry, under Lieutenant Stennett.

Umbana proper was a small blockhouse situated on a kopje about a mile to the north, and manned by eleven men of the Munster Fusiliers.

During this day a Commandant and several Boers surrendered at the blockhouse, and then proceeded to Newcastle.

We were soon fraternizing with our latest friends, and after the "evening stables," beneath the bright, twinkling stars and around a blazing fire of logs, an *al fresco* concert was held in our honour. The officers' gramophone was the chief attraction. As an additional proof of the officers' goodwill and hospitality, each man

*Many of these Yeomen had been in the Tweefontein disaster.

received a free issue of a pint of beer, a cigar, and a packet of cigarettes.

The old Yeomanry departed the next day, the Munster Fusiliers evacuated their posts at the larger and smaller blockhouses and the bridge, following them into Newcastle a week later.

After their departure we paraded, and were duly initiated into our new duties. All the gates had to be closed between sunset and sunrise; sentries and stable picquets allotted their posts. No stranger—white or black—was allowed within the fort after dusk, and anyone observed endeavouring to get through the wire entanglements was to be shot on sight. In case of an attack an alarm was to be raised by the sentry firing three shots in rapid succession, when every man immediately was to proceed with the utmost expedition to his allotted post behind the sandbag wall on the inner defences. Our officer especially impressed upon us the necessity of thoroughly realising that we were not *playing* at soldiers, but were on active service; that although Peace had been proclaimed we were not, therefore, to consider ourselves immune from attack, as it had been estimated that some 5,000 armed Boers were still out on commando.

Most of the remounts gave their owners satisfaction, many of the yeomen with pride readily disclosing the especial good points of their respective animals. Personally, while making no pretence of being a good judge of horseflesh, at first I considered my beast a fairly

tolerable one, as the saddle felt pretty easy and my nag kept a good pace. But at stables it manifested a violent temper. Directly the curry-comb was applied, it violently resisted all attempts at grooming, kicking in all directions. After several ineffectual attempts, I explained my difficulty to the sergeants and officer. They warily examined the horse, the while continually dodging its hoofs. Finally after the legs were pinioned, a yeoman, between its vicious kicks, managed to give the beast a rough grooming. As it became troubled later with a complaint of the eyes it was sent into New-castle with other sick horses, and I got a quieter mount.

The scenery on the north, as viewed from our block-house, was an extensive and magnificent panorama of Nature displayed in all the beauty and abandonment of its wild and rugged grandeur. Giant sugar-loafed and flat-topped kopjes, towering several thousands of feet, were crowded together in an apparently indescribable confusion.

In South Africa the strata of the kopjes are horizontal, and have often steep, craggy escarpments, whilst usually the surfaces of the mountains are protected from the disintegrating influences of the weather by a covering of hard, igneous rock.

The country betwixt us and this range was of an undulating nature—a succession of kopjes and valleys. In the distance Amajuba and Mount Prospect were plainly discernible through the clear, crisp, veld air. At sunset the sky was lit up by beautiful glowing varia-

tions of colour, and as the light gradually failed the contours of the giant peaks, rearing their spiked pinnacles above the surrounding landscape, were strongly silhouetted against the fast-deepening background, whilst the heavenly constellations shone with a brilliance seldom seen in England. There was little or no twilight, and the speedy transition from sunshine to dusk, and then to night, was accompanied by a rapid fall of temperature, due to the removal of the sun's direct rays in the high, dry atmosphere. This necessitated the donning of a jersey or a greatcoat.

At night-time we could see the distant twinkling lights of Newcastle and Charlestown, and frequently what appeared like long, thin, illuminated snakes as the trains wound along the base of a range of kopjes between these two towns.

Not unfrequently in this climate a cold, biting wind is accompanied by plenty of blinding and stinging dust. On cold and cloudy days these winds were not uncommon. Dust-storms are a characteristic feature of the veld. They spring from apparently nowhere, swirling upwards in circles to a height of from fifty to a hundred feet, and sweep along, carrying all loose, light articles before them. Then, as their suddenly acquired strength diminishes, they sink earthwards and disappear with almost the same rapidity that they sprang into being and activity.

On the afternoon of June 19th, Colonel Gough's column, which had trekked from the Eastern Transvaal,

outspanned in the valley below our blockhouse, departing the following morning.

Being dispatched with a message to the camp, I managed to glean some information from the men. The column consisted of the famous Dublin Fusiliers—then formed into the 24th Mounted Infantry. At the outbreak of the war they were drafted to South Africa from Egypt, engaged at Talena Hill, and at the end of hostilities in the great drive against De Wet at Lindley, which resulted in the capture of over 300 Boers. They also brought a rumour that the Zulus had broken out and imminent fighting was anticipated.

That night I was on stable picquet from half-past two until reveillé at half-past six. About three o'clock, while passing between the first and second horse lines, I was suddenly startled by a loud report just behind me and heard a bullet whizz past. For a few seconds all the animals seemed incapable of movement, and then, as though they had suddenly regained their lost strength, commenced kicking and struggling violently. Two broke loose and for awhile eluded capture. The corporal of the guard and several men came bundling from their tents, imagining an attack was pending. As nothing further of an alarming nature occurred, we concluded that one of the animals must have kicked up a partially buried round of ammunition which its shoe had somehow fired.

The night was intensely cold, and we sentries felt quite numbed, as on our exposed kopje we caught the

full blast of the penetrating, icy wind which swept unrestrained across several miles of open country. Between four and five o'clock (the coldest hour before dawn when one's vitality is at its lowest ebb) the cold seemed to have obtained a complete hold upon me. I was seized with a great drowsiness, and for about ten minutes trotted up and down in an agonising struggle to keep awake. Hearing loud snores close by I found one of the sentries had already succumbed to sleep and rather enjoyed his fright when arousing him.

The following afternoon twelve of us formed the mounted escort to the mail from Utrecht to Newcastle, which travelled along the road between these two towns several times a week, when we supplid the escort for a portion of the journey. Our party, including the sergeant, met the mail mule-waggon at Zand Creek, seven miles from Umbana, which we took over from some Middlesex Mounted Infantry, who had escorted it from Utrecht. Some armed, surrendered Boers were also travelling upon the waggon to Newcastle.

Lieutenant Ritchie took a party of us the following day on a ten-mile patrol. Some empty farms were visited, and proclamations in English and Dutch nailed upon the doors. The only interesting incident occurred on our return journey, when a Kaffir stopped our party and handed the officer a rifle and a well-filled bandolier which he professed to have found.

On Sunday, the 22nd, sudden orders were received for every available man to "saddle up" and proceed to

Zand Creek to meet and escort a "cow gun" (lyddite) and some ammunition coming from Utrecht to Newcastle. Our destination was reached at noon, where we waited somewhat impatiently until nearly five o'clock for the convoy. Being in the advance guard I saw but little of it, but could hear the heavy gun lumbering along in our rear.

Just before sunset we happened upon a Colonial, with a waggon and a team of mules, hesitating at the junction of two roads. He enquired of me which road led to Wakkerstroom—some twenty miles distant—and appeared rather aggrieved at my uncertainty. However, as he took the road indicated, I hope he did not go astray. We reached Umbana blockhouse at eight o'clock, and, after feeding and rugging our horses, enjoyed the hot stew dinner awaiting us.

On account of the Coronation festivities then actively in preparation, all available troops in the district were being concentrated at Newcastle. Lieutenant Ritchie, with "A" troop, and Sergeant-Major Trudgeon, returned to Newcastle on June 23rd—as the 34th Battalion, with the other Yeomanry detachments, was detailed to take part in the grand military parade to be held in the town—leaving "B" troop, under Lieutenant De Rees, in charge of the blockhouse.

Ascertaining that I had previously been in the Army Medical Service, Lieutenant West, of the Munster Fusiliers—before his departure—had handed over to me the blockhouse medical chest, and, with my officer's

approval, I was duly appointed *medico officio, pro tem.*, of the fort. My practice was not an extensive one. Most of my patients were afflicted with merely temporary attacks of diarrhœa, chills and high temperatures, and soon recovered. Two of the more serious cases were sent to Newcastle Hospital. But my most interesting case—from a medical point of view—was that of one of our transport niggers. He came to me early one morning with his hand terribly lacerated, through an accident caused by some corrugated iron sheeting. After antiseptically washing and dressing it he was told to come again the next day. He appeared the following morning, and with a beaming countenance, exclaimed: "It's better, Baas," at the same time showing his injured hand uncovered, while he held the loose dressings in the other. Before re-dressing it I lectured him severely upon the folly of interfering with the bandages. He did not meddle with the dressings after that. In a few days the wound was rapidly healing, to his immense satisfaction.

Somewhat to my embarrassment my officer asked me to be his cook. When I demurred, pleading an extremely limited knowledge of the culinary art, he brusquely disposed of my apprehensions by detailing his servant, Trooper S. Thomas, to assist me. I consented conditionally to his overlooking the mistakes of an amateur. Without further ado, Thomas and I installed ourselves in the corrugated iron shanty which contained a small stove, table and form. The place

was very draughty, consequently the fire often burnt badly. Frequently we got smoked out, until the wind shifted. One modestly refrains from enumerating the various dishes and their mode of preparation. Suffice it to say that our officer enjoyed his food, or perhaps he considered it more discreet not to quarrel with his cook!

The officer lodged in the blockhouse itself, but the Munster Fusilier officer had been occupying a small, conical, Kaffir hut, built of cane and rush matting, which stood near the cookhouse. Thomas and the "new cook" speedily appropriated it for their own use. The acting sergeant-major expressed a desire to occupy it, but we candidly gave him to understand our intention of remaining in possession—which we did. It was a snug retreat; the floor was hollowed out in the centre, forming an earth ledge all around the inner side. Wrapped in our blankets at night we were extremely cosy and contented.

Possessing a Kodak camera, my services in this vocation were in constant requisition. My position was unique—officer's cook, blockhouse doctor, and photographer! I realised my importance. Perhaps my officer felt the same. At any rate, he readily allowed me the use of a dark corner in his room, within the fort, for developing purposes. Also, at his request, the whole troop, fully armed and mounted, was photographed, the horses being brought in from grazing earlier than usual for this purpose. Whenever officers

visited the fort—which they frequently did—I fear the cook was often one of the topics discussed in the mess. In turn he had to interview Colonel Roch, Major Chitty and Captain Buckley—when they visited us—and exhibit his photographic handiwork. But they were exceedingly nice and complimentary respecting the soup and coffee, and as the two latter officers also possessed Kodaks we were able to talk “shop” unreservedly. Captain Buckley further kindly manifested his interest by giving me some photographic materials.

In anticipation of the Coronation celebrations which were to have been held at Newcastle on June 26th, Lieutenant De Rees had arranged for a troop gymkhana, promising a prize of a guinea to the section which performed a particularly interesting event in the quickest time. But on the night of the 25th we heard with regret of the King’s serious illness and the consequent postponing of all celebrations. In some cases farmers from outlying districts rode into Newcastle on the 26th to take part in the celebrations, only to learn the sad news.

Officers’ visits were not confined to those of our own battalion; those belonging to other regiments, when passing our blockhouse, were hospitably entertained. Often times it was a difficult task to victual them all, as our quarter-master—who trekked daily to Newcastle for supplies—only drew the exact number of rations required for our troop, and he not infrequently grumbled when applied to for extra food. Frequently, Thomas

and myself could only meet these deficiencies by giving up the greater portion of our own rations.

One Sunday afternoon there were seven officers to tea. To meet the natural deficiency of cups, canteens were borrowed from the men for the visitors' use. The officers possessed keen appetites and quickly demolished the small stock of bread provided, but heartily appreciated the humour of the situation, when, interrogated by our officer, his servant was compelled to candidly inform him that there was no more.

Upon another occasion Colonel Roch, Major Chitty and Mrs. Waldron, the wife of Colonel Waldron, C.B.—at that time C.O., Remounts depôts at Newcastle and Harrismith—paid a visit, and a special meal had to be prepared for them.

Taken altogether, our blockhouse life was a very easy and enjoyable one, and the daily routine was not greatly disturbed. Reveillé was at 6.30 a.m., while stables, rifle inspection, camp fatigues, blockhouse and grazing guards, picquets, riding, foot drills, and mail escorts to and from Zand Creek were the chief duties of the men. Occasionally at sunset the officer and some men indulged in a little vigorous exercise at tent pegging, or, while galloping between posts, endeavoured to dislodge tin cans from them. Between my duties I found opportunities for photograph developing within our kraal. Our strength had been further increased by the addition of a cat and her kitten, who, being left at the neighbouring blockhouse, and probably feeling lone-

some, had joined our troop. One feline acquisition showed a decided preference for sleeping at my feet at nights. At first she was allowed to do so, but when she took advantage of her position to assuage her thirst with the water in which some photographic prints were soaking, this indulgence was speedily withdrawn.

Many men of our troop were Welsh miners. Beneath their rough exterior several showed unmistakeable evidences of a strong, religious fervour; their singing was splendid. On a certain night one usually reticent young fellow, begging my pardon for his apparent intrusion, requested a few minutes' private conversation. Quite unknown to me, he confessed he had kept me under his close observation since my enlistment, with the result that he had come to the conclusion I had joined the Imperial Yeomanry in order (to use his own words) "to convert as many of them as possible, as he could tell by something in my face that I was a Christian." He justified his conviction upon this point as he had overheard my conversation with a missionary aboard the ss. *Assaye* at Southampton. From his past life I gathered that he had Godly parents, but was the "black sheep" of the family. As a miner he had worked in South Wales, and detailed many pathetic scenes among the workers and the dangers they constantly encountered. For a long time he had wished to change his mode of life and become a Christian, but not knowing how to accomplish it, had felt much distressed. Apparently he laboured under

some morbid delusion that his span of life would only be prolonged for another five or six years, and when his end came, he desired to meet his death while saving a comrade's life. I felt much impressed by his story, the apparent sincerity of the confidence thus displayed, and endeavoured to point him to One who can comfort every anxious soul seeking after the Truth. Somehow I instinctively felt that my words made but little impression upon him at the time, but have remembered him in my prayers.

One cold, gusty night, I ran some risk of being shot in mistake by the sentry on duty. He had seen me near my Kaffir hut, and a few minutes later, happening to observe me close by the wire entanglements, challenged thrice. Owing to the strong wind whistling towards me from his direction, my answers failed to reach him. Somewhat alarmed by my apparent silence, he had begun fingering nervously his rifle bolt. Had he possessed a little more pluck he would doubtless have fired.

On June 27th our surplus kit bags arrived from Pietermaritzburg, but many of them had been pilfered of their contents. Mine were among the missing. We were paraded and lists taken of the deficiencies, but received practically no compensation for our losses.

One day our officer gave Thomas and me permission to visit some kraals to purchase fowls and eggs, and we took an interesting ride of about twenty-five miles. Several farmers—who had returned to their farms—

took a deep interest in us, one especially coveting my horse, and even offering me a price for it. We visited several kraals endeavouring to purchase fowls, eggs, and bracelets, and thus fulfilling our sobriquet of "Farmyard Scouts." At one kraal an old Kaffir woman squatting on the roof—goodness knows how she got there—was haranguing the piccaninnies gathered below her. The scene was unique for a snapshot! To my surprise, as my camera was unfolded, the youngsters shrieked with fear and scurried into the hut. After waiting impatiently, their heads were observed, one after another—and one above another, according to the height of their respective owners—cautiously peering from the door. At my shouts to reassure them they were immediately withdrawn. This performance was repeated several times, when subterfuges had to be resorted to, but with no better success. At last in desperation I made a frantic effort, but only succeeded in "snapping" two piccaninnies. As we could obtain no decent fowls from the kraals, the veld was searched for wild birds. My chum espied an enormous bird and fired, but missed it. I then recognised it as a vulture, and warned him there was a heavy penalty for shooting these "scavengers of the veld." Later on he brought down a wild fowl, and I succeeded in winging a quail.

Rumours had daily been gaining credence of Zulu discontent, and that our battalion had been ordered to trek into the disaffected district. The prospects of trekking and fighting naturally produced much excite-

ment. Our natural curiosity was further increased by the arrival of a company of Royal Engineers from Newcastle, who commenced the first stages of dismantling the blockhouse by removing the outer circle of barbed-wire entanglements; also by the visit of Lieutenant Henman, of " B " Squadron, to arrange the necessary details for his troop to relieve ours.

Active preparations were then made for our early departure, and we vaguely wondered how far correct were our surmises which these changes portended.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE VRYHEID DISTRICT.

With the white man the "native question" in South Africa has always proved an incongruous and complex one. From the days of the early settlers, between the European colonists and their descendants as against the native races, there has existed an intermittent warfare right down to the present generation. During the nineteenth century nine Kaffir wars have been waged with Great Britain. But, to their credit, the British Government in South Africa has always endeavoured honestly to be the friend and protector of the natives under their administration.

The Dutch settlers, on the other hand—who were the slave-holders of the natives—held strongly, and still hold, to the Old Testament idea of an inferior race. Thus the stormy and chequered career of the South African native, during the nineteenth century, is naturally of great interest to students of South African history.

In 1833 Wilberforce and his friends carried through Parliament the Emancipation Act, which measure abolished slavery in the British Colonies, and provided £20,000,000 as compensation to slave-holders, £3,000,000 of this sum being apportioned to our South African territories.

The humanity of the British Government towards

the Black races only served to stir up the bitter animosity of the Dutch, many of whom, in 1835, travelled up-country and settled beyond the Orange River. This was known as "The Great Trek," and the travellers as the "Voortrekkers." After passing through many vicissitudes and conflicts with the hostile natives, the two Dutch Republics were eventually formed and recognised by Great Britain. Even then their natural turbulence caused internal troubles within the borders of these two States, both among themselves and with the natives, whom they treated with great severity.

Among the natives of South Africa the Zulus and Basutos are powerful races, of splendid physique and courage, many of them being veritable giants. Although of a savage and warlike nature, they show a greater average intelligence than the other native races.

The constant encroachment of the Boers upon the Basuto territory which joined the eastern frontier of the Orange Free State, coupled with the ambitions of the great Basuto chief Mohesh, who endeavoured to regain the country south of the River Vaal and west of the Drakensbergs, previously occupied by the great Bantu race, from which many of his followers had been drawn, led to constant warfare.

After several years of intermittent strife with Mohesh between Cape Colony and the Dutch settlers in the Orange Free State, the Basuto chief finally relinquished his claim to the disputed tract of territory previously **taken** from the Basutos by the Boers, and in 1871

Basutoland was annexed to Cape Colony. Since 1884 it has been administered as a British Crown Colony.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the great Zulu nation in South Africa occupied Zululand and the greater part of Natal. A mighty Zulu conqueror had swept across the then great unknown region north of the Orange River, leaving it tenanted only by dwarf bushmen. The Matabeli are a branch of this powerful Zulu race.

On December 16th, 1838, at Vechtkop, on the Blood River, the "Voortrekkers" inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Zulu Chief Dingaan's impis as a punishment for the latter's terrible massacre of Piet Retief's commando at Dingaanstaad, in the Vryheid district. This victory was annually celebrated by the Boers, and known as "Dingaan's Day."

But despite this overwhelming defeat the Zulu dynasty, founded by Chief T'Chaka,* increased and strengthened. A later king, named Panda, turned out a weak and indolent monarch. His son Cetewayo, however, showed a determination and strength of will and leadership that was lacking in his father. Among his many warlike feats he killed his elder brother and

*Chief T'Chaka, and the beginning of the history of the Zulu nation in 1813, or thereabouts, might almost be considered as synonymous. It is said that this chief had heard, through the medium of some English sailors, of Napoleon's exploits, and modelled himself after that great military genius. As a result of his military organization, he had an army of fifty thousand Zulu warriors. These were divided into "impis" or regiments, each commanded by its own "induna" (headman or colonel). This military organization has continued right down to the present day.

defeated his followers with great slaughter. Upon the death of Panda, Cetewayo claimed the throne, and, in 1873, the late Sir Theophilus Shepstone—father of Mr. Arthur Shepstone, the present resident magistrate of Vryheid—on behalf of the British Government, proceeded to Zululand and crowned Cetewayo King of the Zulus.

From the commencement of his career as paramount chief, Cetewayo endeavoured to make his country a great military nation. He organised a despotic form of armies, which made him a powerful monarch and greatly feared in South Africa. Acting upon the assumption that marriage made his warriors effeminate, he forbade their marrying unless they had won the privilege by killing a foe.

Thus the Zulu nation, under the strong rule of Cetewayo, was recognised as the most warlike, most intelligent, most active, and most fearless of all the natives throughout South Africa. Naturally, under their powerful chief and by reason of their barbarities and warlike incursions into Natal, they soon became a menace to the peace of South Africa. The late Sir Bartle Frere—the then Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for the whole of South Africa—realising that the peace of South Africa could only be maintained by curbing or breaking the Zulu power, sent an ultimatum to Cetewayo, demanding that he should promise to stop certain savage practices within his territory, besides imposing upon him other restrictions.

Cetewayo refused these demands, and on January 10th, 1879, war was declared, and the British expeditionary force, under Lord Chelmsford, marched into Zululand.

Although the Zulus fought with a courage begotten of their race they were eventually defeated, but not before the British troops had suffered severe reverses at Insandlwana, Intombi, and Hlobane.* (Both these latter places are in the Vryheid district.)

At Rorke's Drift a handful of British soldiers made a gallant stand against thousands of savage Zulus. It was during a reconnaissance at Voënjaan, near Vryheid, on June 1st, 1879, that the unfortunate Prince Napoleon Eugene was attacked by a party of Zulus and fell with his face towards the foe.

At Ulundi, Cetewayo's capital, the Zulu warriors, to the number of about 20,000, fought and lost their last battle. A few weeks later Cetewayo was captured and exiled. This defeat ended the war; the chiefs made their submission to the British, and from that day the Zulu power was broken. Since then they have never recovered their former supremacy.

Sir Garnet (now Field-Marshal) Wolseley—who had superseded Lord Chelmsford in the supreme command

*It was at the battle of Hlobane, fought on March 28th, 1879, that Colonel (now General Sir) Redvers Buller, received the Victoria Cross in recognition of his gallant conduct. At the risk of his own life and while hotly pursued by the Zulus, he succeeded in rescuing Captain C. d'Arcy, of the "Frontier Horse," who was retiring on foot.

—had been forbidden to annex the country. He therefore proceeded to make arrangements for the settlement of Zululand by dividing it into thirteen districts, each being assigned under the government of a chief, independent of the others, and nominally ruling under the advice of a single resident British official. By the breaking up of the great kraals the Zulu military system was abolished, thus ending the Zulu terror.

One noteworthy chieftain was a Scotsman—the late John Dunn—who had lived for several years among the Zulus and had come to be feared and respected by them. He died in Zululand a few years since. Another chief was Hlubi, a Basuto, who had rendered good service to the British during the Zulu war.

Unfortunately, Sir Garnet Wolseley's allocation of thirteen districts, ruled by an independent chief, proved a decided failure. The chiefs indulged in perpetual strife—Chief John Dunn being the only ruler who preserved order within his territory.

The Basuto Hlubi was the cause of much antipathy to the Zulu chiefs, and, although frequently attacked by them, he was always successful in holding his own. Eventually he defeated them with great slaughter at the nek leading into 'Forgosi Valley. It is said that whitened skeletons of the slain are still visible on the slopes of the kopjes overlooking the River Tugela.

In 1883 the Imperial Government restored to Cetewayo part of his former kingdom. He was installed on January 29th by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in the

presence of some 5,000 Zulus. But the power which Cetewayo's name had formerly inspired had now departed, and his reception by his people was a mixed one. Some adherents welcomed his return, but others threw in their lot with a rival named Usibepu, chief of Umsandhlakazi, who had secured a large following. Fighting at once took place between the rival chiefs, and Usibepu completely routed Cetewayo. Thereupon he fled for protection to the British Resident, with whom he remained until his death in 1884.

Upon his death the Usutu party, who had been loyal to Cetewayo, proclaimed the latter's son, Dinizulu, as his successor.

Constant warfare continued to exist between Usibepu and Dinizulu, in which the latter suffered frequent defeats; bloodthirsty raids were made on either side, the country was devastated, and the Zulus continued to exterminate each other.

Dinizulu, unable to successfully cope with his powerful adversary, at last solicited aid from the Natal Government and subsequently from the Transvaal Boer Government, which was in both cases refused to him. Finally, he secured the help of a body of neighbouring Dutch farmers, who, in a battle fought on the 6th of June, 1884, defeated and put Usibepu to flight in the district of the Lebombo Mountains.

In return for these services the Boers claimed a large tract of land—nearly the greater part of Zululand. Dinizulu appealed to the British Government against

these excessive demands, who supported his protest, but the Boers were allowed to retain that part of the country which included Wakkerstroom, Utrecht, and the Vryheid districts, which they named the "New Republic." The town of Vryheid (Liberty), founded on November 12th, 1884, was chosen as the capital of the infant Republic.

General P. Joubert (late Commandant-General of the Transvaal forces), having declined the honour of being its first President, Lucas Meyer was elected to this office. In 1886 the "New Republic" was recognised by the British Government.

The Zulus, having become exhausted by the dynastic feuds and tribal wars, and unable to resist the encroachments of the Boers, the Imperial Government, in 1886, planted the Union Jack in Saint Lucia Bay (to frustrate some feared German designs upon this part of the coast), and in May of the following year annexed the remainder of Zululand.

Owing to internal Boer dissensions, the "New Republic," with the consent of the British Government, was, in July, 1888, incorporated into the Transvaal.

In the same year Dinizulu revolted against the British, and, after a short skirmish at Ceza Bush, he and several of his principal men were taken prisoners at Eshowe, tried, and found guilty of the charge of high treason. Dinizulu was sentenced to ten, and Undabuko and Tshingaan to twelve and fifteen years' imprisonment respectively, and were deported to Saint

Helena. They were released by the British Government in 1897 and allowed to return to Zululand. In the same year the country was annexed to Natal.

At the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899 the natives of South Africa were a very uncertain populace to deal with, and required a firm but judicious handling upon the part of the British authorities. The loyalty of the natives in Cape Colony and Natal to British authority was unquestioned but although the majority of Kaffirs residing in the two Dutch Republics favoured the British, some—either through fear or compulsion—served with the Boer forces. Both the Zulus and Basutos professed their loyalty to Her late Majesty the Queen, and from their natural antipathy towards their Boer neighbours, willingly volunteered their services to fight with the Imperial troops against their former foes. Whilst appreciating this spontaneous desire to serve the Crown, the Imperial Government was compelled tactfully to decline their proffered help, informing them that, being a white man's war, it must be waged only by white men; but arms were permitted to some of the Zulus and Basutos—whose territories bordered on the two Boer Republics—for their self-preservation.

Many natives were employed by the British military authorities as transport mule and ox drivers and leaders, and also in the Intelligence department, where they rendered valuable service by ascertaining the

strength and whereabouts of the enemy, or in carrying despatches through the Boer lines.

During the war the Basutos evinced a great interest in its course, gathering in crowds on the border and watching the progress of events at the investments of Wepener (April, 1900), Ladybrand (September, 1900), and the operations culminating in Prinsloo's surrender in the Brandwater Basin (July, 1900).

* Lerothodi, the paramount Basuto chief, also Jonathan, head of the Maloppo family, maintained their loyalty throughout the war; but another chief, named Joel, continually rendered assistance to the Boers.

One night, towards the end of the war, a commando of Boers, some sixty strong, attempted to raid some Zulu cattle at Holkrantz (Matatschan), near Vryheid. The Zulus attacked the Boers with great vigour and killed all but two lads, who hid in a donga.†

Somewhat naturally the Boers attributed this action on the part of the Zulus to our instigation, but an exhaustive enquiry after the war showed that there was no foundation for this accusation. Indeed, the enquiry went to prove that the commando had brought its fate on itself by the brutal manner in which the natives had

*Lerothodi's death occurred in 1905, and his son Letsia was unanimously chosen by the Pitso, or National Assembly of Basutos, as his successor. Letsia was proclaimed Paramount Chief of Basutoland, at Maseru, on September 19th, 1905, amid a scene of unparalleled excitement. The young Chief Paramount was then committed to the care of his uncle, Chief Jonathan.

†It has been said that when the Zulus subsequently reported the affair to the authorities at Vryheid, and were interrogated as to the fate of the Boers, they replied: "We killed them all."

been treated by the Boers generally, and it is not too much to say that the latter had merited the vengeance of the Zulus and got no more than they deserved.

By this time (July, 1902) the Zulus, flushed with their recent victory over the raiding Boer commando, were preparing to resist the re-occupation by the Boers of their former farms. These burghers had no shelter other than that afforded by a tent, and no weapons except a gun or two with which to protect their lives against this hostile native population.

In order to quell this threatened outbreak by hostile natives, a wing of the 34th Battalion of Yeomanry was ordered to join Colonel Mills's column at Vryheid, and trek into the troubled district, viz.: that portion of Zululand which had been taken over by the Boers as payment for services rendered to Dinizulu in re-establishing him as paramount chief in 1884.

Simultaneously the 33rd Battalion of Yeomanry were ordered to the Upper Tugela, and another battalion to Harrismith. These movements were designed on account of the disturbed state of Basutoland. It was rumoured that his Basuto followers had intended to resist the arrest of Chief Joel, who was charged with treason committed during the Boer War. Joel, however, came in quietly, was tried and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and the orders given to the Yeomanry to proceed to Basutoland were therefore cancelled.

On July 13th (1902), we were astir at an early hour, making final arrangements for departure from Umbana blockhouse to join our battalion at Newcastle and proceed to Vryheid. Soon after seven o'clock we were relieved by Lieutenant Henman and his troop ("B" troop of 152nd Company), who had arrived from Newcastle as the blockhouse garrison.

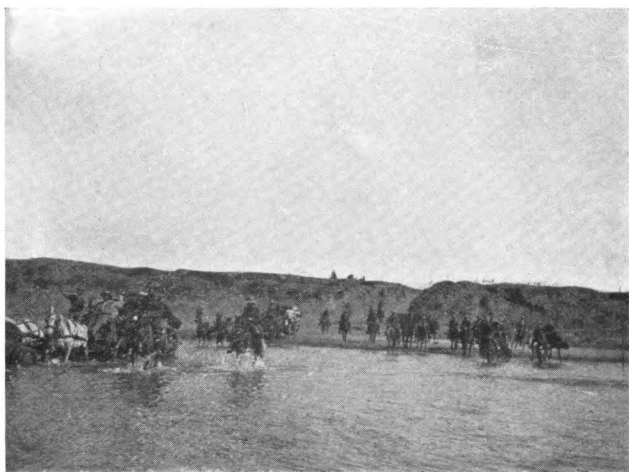
The morning was bright and clear, betokening a hot day. After a couple of hours' easy riding we reached Newcastle. Several additional camps lay near the town, also some remnants of the decorations erected for the Coronation festivities, conspicuous among them being a triumphal arch in the main street.

Our battalion's camp presented an animated scene; tents were being struck, waggons packed and roped, and remounts saddled. Consequently we had but little time to exchange greetings with our comrades, but they all appeared fit and keen for trekking, with the exception of our poor Battalion Sergeant-major Armstrong, who had, a few days' previously, unfortunately been thrown from his horse and sustained a fracture of his left clavicle, and was walking through camp with his arm in a sling.

To ensure the safety of my photographic paraphernalia during the trekking, my officer kindly arranged for it to accompany the officers' baggage, and Lieutenant Ritchie, who was superintending the officers' transport, personally ascertained that it was securely packed



"B" TROOP (151ST Coy.) AT UMBANA BLOCKHOUSE.



YEOMANRY CROSSING A RIVER.

PLATE V.

on their waggon—a thoughtful act which I much appreciated.

Amid a pile of surplus kit were my two belated kit bags, which previously had been forwarded with others from the temporary store at Pietermaritzburg, but both were quite empty!

The 34th Battalion was now divided up into the following sections:—(1) On the column: "A," part of "B" and "C" Squadrons, under Captains Buckley, Fothergill and Yorke respectively, Major Chitty being in command; (2) At Konigsberg blockhouse: "D" Squadron, under Captain Martin, relieving "B" Squadron, commanded by Captain Fothergill; (3) at Umbana blockhouse: one troop of "B" Squadron, under Lieutenant Henman; (4) at Newcastle: Colonel T. Roch, Adjutant-Captain Williams, the Headquarter Staff, one troop of "B" Squadron, under Lieutenant Trotter, together with details from "A" and "C" Squadrons.

Leaving Newcastle at noon, our battalion followed the road which ran south and parallel to the railway. The two items of interest during this day's journey was the meeting of a large mounted infantry column—war-worn, travel-stained, ragged, but hardy-looking campaigners nevertheless, and attired in various kinds of headgear—and the breaking down of one of our transport waggons at a drift. Otherwise our trek was without incident. After travelling over some thirteen

miles of flat veld we outspanned for the night close to Dalhousie Station.

As my position as officer's cook had ceased with our departure from Umbana, I returned to duty with my troop. Our tents remaining on the waggon all night, we bivouacked in the open. My chum Torkington, another companion and myself slept together, piling our saddlery at our heads as an effective screen against the cold wind.

At reveillé on the following morning the landscape was blurred by a thick, clinging mist, and our blankets were soaked with this moist atmosphere. After a hurried, scrambling sort of a meal, we moved off soon after seven o'clock, crossed the railway, and travelled in an easterly direction. The mist, suddenly lifting, was soon dissipated by the sun's penetrating rays, which quickly diffused light and warmth over the surrounding country. We passed close to the Natal Navigation Colliery, the European and native employés, who were visible, stopping in their work and gazing at us with some interest.

Being winter-time the veld presented an arid appearance, and the broad acres of blackened patches had a rather depressing effect. At this season of the year the long, dried, yellowy grass is usually burnt—sometimes purposely, frequently by accident. The surface thus cleared of old, withered grass enables young shoots to sprout, and in a few weeks the veld is covered with a verdant pasture, pleasing to the eyes and much en-

joyed by the cattle. Here and there the monotony of the veld was relieved by an isolated farm, Kaffir kraals, a withered mealie patch, or conical and flat-topped kopjes.

Shortly after noon we outspanned at Vaal Farm—distant some twenty miles from Dalhousie. After picketing, grooming and feeding our horses we sprawled in the sun and enjoyed a well-earned siesta, our only head-screen being a combination of our saddles and slouch hats. The waggons were delayed for several hours on the road through a mishap. Everyone was ravenous, and officers and men alike in choler at the delay of our provisions. When the transport arrived some hours later it was hailed with acclamation by all ranks.

The Coronation gift of tobacco for the troops—which had hitherto been kept back on account of the postponement of the ceremony—was issued on this day, and consisted of two-and-a-half packets of cigarettes and half-a-pound of tobacco for each man.

Some amusement was caused by the appearance of a wood fatigue party which had been sent to lop some trees growing near the camp, for fuel. One herculean Welsh yeoman arrived coolly carrying a young tree on his shoulder with as much ease as a staff, while some smaller and weaker members of the party struggled along with portions of another.

Whilst we were engaged in unloading the waggons, undesirable comments were freely expressed when,

almost without warning, we were ordered to parade there and then for rifle inspection! Scarcely were we given time even to clean them, and sarcastic references were made by "old campaigners" as to what the "old Yeomanry" would have said to such an order given to them whilst on trek.

Again we bivouacked in the open, and had got comfortably settled down when our troop was rudely aroused by a visiting patrol of officers and non-coms., who ordered us immediately to count our blankets. It had been discovered that some men had taken more than their share. Dire punishments were threatened upon its repetition.

At reveillé the following morning a heavy, penetrating wet mist again hung like a pall over the camp and surrounding country. My two companions, with myself, who had again slept together—gaining wisdom from our previous night's experience that the moisture saturated our blankets from the atmosphere above and not, as is erroneously believed by some, from the ground—had laid our waterproof ground-sheets on top of our blankets, instead of as hitherto, beneath them. As anticipated, we found our waterproofs covered with moisture, but we had kept warm in our dry blankets. We three chums had arranged to sleep in turns between the other two, and as it was my turn on this occasion I spent a beautiful night, snuggling warm and cosy between my two companions. Bivouacking in the open has its advantages; it is a real tonic, and stay-at-

home folks miss a lot of the real joys and comforts one obtains in campaigning!

Besides making everything within camp clammy, this early morning mist possessed other disadvantages. It even penetrated the bugler's instrument, so that at reveillé, after heroically struggling with a few notes, he completely broke down and had to restart, amid the mirth and sarcasms from the whole camp. But it was really too bad when several gratuitously recommended him to try a rifle "pull through." As on the previous day this early morning mist was quickly dissipated by the sun's warm, powerful rays.

On this day's trek we kept mainly on the Vryheid road, and passed several blockhouses which had been abandoned and partially dismantled. At first the surrounding country presented, to an extent, the same characteristic and monotonous bareness of the two previous days' journeys. But as we advanced on our way the aspect changed, the general contour of the landscape showing greater undulations, while farther east could be seen, rising in the distance, the mountain ranges of Zululand.

An interesting feature of this journey was the sight of some Boer families returning to their farms in big lumbering ox-waggons—regular family conveyances. Many of these farmers, who had recently been on commando, looked very grotesque in their broad-brimmed hats, dark countenances, shaggy beards, and clothes

patched with sheepskins, whilst the portly Dutch vrouws and their young children, wearing white limp sun-bonnets, added a rural touch to the scene. The Imperial Government were supplying to each family returning to their ruined farms, a tent, some provisions, etc., to tide them over the interval before they could settle again in their old homes.

At some twenty miles distant from Vaal Farm we crossed De Jager's Drift, outspanning on the opposite bank at noon. Close alongside stood a blockhouse and some details of the Army Service Corps, from whom we obtained one day's supply of bread. During the afternoon many availed themselves of a bathe in the river.

Hitherto our trek from Newcastle had gone smoothly and the performance of our duties had given satisfaction. But on the next day's trek everything seemed to go wrong with our troop. We acted as "advance guard," and I was assigned a position on the "left flank." So many orders were given by our officer respecting our relative alignment and apparently quite misconstrued by the non-coms., that he completely lost his temper, and blamed the non-coms. and men for their seemingly gross stupidity; the non-coms. bullied the men and—among themselves—blamed the officer; while we poor troopers as briskly retaliated upon the supposed ignorance and unreasonableness of the officer (but out of his hearing) and the non-coms. Again, too, in crossing some deep dongas we got very scat-

tered. At one particular drift a trooper close to me was thrown from his mount and dragged for some distance by the "near-side" stirrup. At his cries for help another trooper and myself hurried forward to his assistance, fearing he had broken his leg, but fortunately found he was only bruised and able to remount. Shortly after we were bullied by our non-com. for the delay, and bluntly given to understand that we should not have stopped to assist our distressed comrade. Needless to add he received plenty of back answers from us for his inhuman remarks. Finally Major Chitty, who was leading the main body in our rear, despatched an orderly and enquired of our officer the reason we presented such a scattered "advance guard." This enquiry resulted in most of us being recalled to the troop in the centre and leaving only a few men on the flanks.

The country through which we were now passing was becoming more irregular, the undulations deeper, and the kopjes more profuse. About noon we crossed Blood River, some eighteen miles distant from De Jager's Drift, and outspanned.

At sunset our troop was paraded, and Captain Buckley regretfully informed us that Major Chitty was much displeased with our "advance guard" of the morning's trek, which was disgraceful, and he appealed to us in future to try and "buck up" and be smarter. His gentlemanly manner of addressing us created a far better impression than mere abuse would have done.

After a seventeen-mile trek next day (July 17th) we reached Vryheid, having passed during the last few miles of the journey several culverts and portions of the railway, then in course of building, for connecting Vryheid with Dundee.

Upon our arrival at Vryheid we were attached to Colonel Mills' mobile column (originally forming a part of General Clery's brigade) which was encamped just outside the town.

Colonel Mills' column now consisted of the following troops: Wiggins' Mounted Infantry, the 34th Battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry, a machine-gun section, details of the Royal Engineers and Army Service Corps, and a Field Hospital—altogether about 500 strong. The 1st South Lancashire Regiment garrisoned the town and outposts.

One incident connected with this day's trek was destined to have a salutary effect upon one of the men in our troop. Before leaving camp on each day's trek every man was given a "feed" for his horse, which was carried attached to the saddle. On the previous day the trooper had lost his remount's nose-bag, and when our camping ground at Blood River was reached, anticipating trouble if his loss became known, he had contrived to borrow another, which he strapped over the animal's mouth—but empty! Unfortunately for himself his deception was discovered. As a punishment he was ordered to cover the remaining seventeen miles to Vryheid on foot and carrying his rifle.

Vryheid town is situated at the base of a table-shaped kopje named Lancaster Hill, while the surrounding district is very mountainous and well watered. As is usual in these Boer towns, the most prominent feature of the place is the Dutch Reformed church—built of stone and roofed over with corrugated iron—which occupies a central position in the market square, and is surrounded by various “winkels” or stores. But beyond the Llandrost’s *kantor* or office, a military telegraph and post office, and some buildings occupied by military government officials and “details,” the remainder of the town consisted mainly of private residences, chiefly of the bungalow type. Some of the latter were surrounded by a profusion of foliage, but many were quite bare. The white population was estimated at 900 souls.

Other religious communities in Vryheid are the Church of England (St. Peter’s), the Wesleyan Church, and a Jewish synagogue. There is also a Church of England day school, and a public library and reading room. Two banks, branches of the Bank of Africa and the National Bank, are in the town, while a mail left every week.

A public hospital, in charge of the District surgeon, also had been formed, while tents of the military hospital, under command of Captain W. D. Erskine, R.A.M.C., were pitched on a vacant parcel of ground on the border of the town. Other officials were: Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. Hall, D.S.O., of the 1st

South Lancashire Regiment, the commanding officer of the troops, and Captain S. Upperton, 1st South Lancashire Regiment, the commandant of the town. Mr. Arthur Shepstone (son of the late Sir Theophilus Shepstone) was the resident magistrate.

The district of Vryheid is rich in historical associations. Many of the battles of the Zulu War of 1879, also anterior conflicts, massacres, and the subsequent savage warfare between Usibepu and Dinizulu, took place within this district.

“Dingaanstad,” where Commandant Piet Retief and his commando of “Voortrekkers” were treacherously murdered by the Zulu King Dingaan, in 1838, can still be seen.

“Vechtkop,” on the Blood River, where the old “Voortrekkers” who came to avenge the massacre of their brethren at Dingaanstad, and inflicted a terrible defeat upon the Zulus.

“Insolji,” where a Boer named Piet Uys and his son were murdered by natives.

“Insandhlwana,” where, in 1879, the British troops suffered a severe reverse, and “Rorke’s Drift,” where a small force of British soldiers made so gallant a stand against thousands of their savage foes. Also “Ulindi,” Cetewayo’s capital, where the British finally smashed the Zulu army.

At six hours’ ride on horseback from the town of Vryheid is situated “Voenjaan,” the spot where the

unfortunate Prince Napoleon fell during a reconnaissance on June 1st, 1879.

"Hlobane," the scene of the third British reverse during this native war, lies twelve miles east of the town.

"Kambula" Mountain, nine miles west of the town, where the 90th Regiment, with the auxiliary forces, defeated four regiments of Zulus lead by the native Prime Minister Umnyamana. In this engagement the Zulus are estimated to have lost 6,000 men, including several of Cetewayo's best generals.

During the Anglo-Boer War, Vryheid was captured on September 19th, 1900, by the Fifth Division, commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir H. J. T. Hildyard, C.B. The day previously the British column, advancing from Utrecht, met with some opposition from General Chris. Botha, the latter, with his commandoes, evacuating the town in the evening.

On the same night, the Central Hotel in Vryheid was burnt. During the war it had been used as an hospital wherein some wounded prisoners were quartered. The liquor then remaining in the hotel was recklessly consumed by the Boers before their departure.

Our battalion encamped for a week at Vryheid, and besides the daily camp routine duties, guards and picquets, we were instructed in what was known as the "method of Zulu warfare." Mounted parties advanced in troop formation against similar bodies—the latter representing the Zulus. Instead of the sections

dismounting and taking cover, as was usually done during the Boer War, the file of mounted men turned their horses "half-right," slipped the reins over their left wrists, and retaining the leather by a double twist. This movement left the arms free to fire straight ahead at the foe, but diagonally across our respective mounts, thus avoiding the danger of startling the beasts by discharging volleys directly over their heads. After a few volleys the respective troops "wheeled about," retired at a canter, again "wheeled about," and poured in fresh volleys at their "foes." This novel method of warfare was extremely interesting and humorous, and we thoroughly enjoyed the tuition.

The river where we watered our horses twice a day was situated quite a mile from camp. During the second day, at evening stables, Trooper A. Thomas, of our troop, whilst returning from the river at a canter, was thrown from his mount—we rode them barebacked, and each man generally had two or more "led horses besides his own—and unfortunately fractured his left clavicle. I found him in great pain and surrounded by several sympathisers, and placing a handkerchief pad beneath his armpit, took him back to camp. At Captain Buckley's request I conveyed him to the Field Hospital close by, and was able to assist the Colonel-surgeon and his assistants while they set the fractured bone. The surgeon appeared quite oblivious to the deference to which his rank justly entitled him. In his dress too, he was equally neglectful. He wore an

ordinary Army "grey-back" shirt with frayed sleeves, whilst his soiled tunic was in a similar condition. Indeed, he made a stranger feel quite easy in his presence, and was one who readily could command respect without enforcing it. Naturally much sympathy was shown towards our unfortunate chum, who bemoaned the fate confining him to hospital for at least a month, whilst we were trekking in Zululand.

An issue of new clothing was made at this camp, but was found insufficient to supply everyone. At a parade a few days later Major Chitty commented on some of the men not wearing their new outfits, and I took this opportunity of informing our captain that I was minus a new tunic.

An open-air service was held in camp on the first Sunday morning, the officiating Church of England minister riding over from Vryheid. He preached a fair sermon, but otherwise the service was very half-hearted and dull. Several of us managed, however, to attend evening service at the English Church.

One day we had a very interesting conversation with a Colonial who for many years had resided in Vryheid, and who recounted many of his reminiscences connected with the late war. As he was the local printer the Boers decided—after a conference—to excuse him serving on commando, appointing him instead as their official printer. For this service he received his rations during the war. But his salary was deferred

and promised to be met at the conclusion of the war! Apparently he was still waiting a settlement.

Evidently the subalterns had been reprov'd for permitting some apparent laxity upon our part to military discipline and obedience, and thereby ordered to instil into our minds a more perfect sense of our duties and respect towards our superior officers. At least so we conjectured, for the day after our arrival at Vryheid, without any apparent justification, a seemingly unnecessary code of severity was suddenly imposed and rigidly enforced. The non-coms. were reprov'd by some of the officers for not upholding the dignity of their respective ranks, and were ordered to place men in the guard tent for the slightest hesitancy or laxity in compliance to their orders. Consequently the men began to be "run in" for most trivial offences.

While we naturally agreed that for proper efficiency military discipline must be maintained in the Army, and especially on active service, we felt that it should have been carried out in the first instance during our preliminary training at Aldershot, and not suddenly and drastically imposed upon us during this stage of our service. We smarted under and greatly resented the arrogant authority, imperious commands, and unreasonableness of some of the non-coms., who endeavoured, upon the slightest provocation, to appear smart and "regimental," but proved dismal failures in their efforts, while they received the execrations of those over whom they attempted to tyrannize.

Again, upon the same day we were ordered to clean our saddlery and furbish our stirrup-irons and bits. This may not at first seem a very onerous task. But during the war all the metal parts of the soldiers' accoutrements and saddlery had been dulled, and in some instances painted kharki-colour, so as not to prove an effective target for the enemy's fire. Our saddlery had been taken over from the 11th Battalion of Yeomanry, who had been in the field for several months, and naturally by this time they were very much worn, also corroded with dirt, the rust, without exception, having eaten into the metal.

Throughout the greater part of the forenoon and afternoon we squatted on the edge of a small, dirty pool—fouled by straying cattle—and endeavoured, with the aid of sand, mud and water, to erase rust and dirt from the metal. Certainly we succeeded in rubbing a lot of skin from off our hands. We vaguely wondered what the "old Yeomanry" would have said to such an order! Had we been supplied liberally with the proper cleansing materials and allowed sufficient time, there would have been little or no cause for complaint. We came in for some facetious comments from the mounted infantry, who sarcastically enquired whether our officers couldn't find us something to do. Truly we were earning our "five bob a day"! At the saddlery inspection several men were reprimanded because, forsooth, after rubbing for hours, they had failed to completely erase all stains from the metal!

One morning after some further tuition in Zulu warfare our squadron watered their horses at the river. For a trivial mistake upon the part of another trooper and myself, the officer in charge of the party ordered us both one hour defaulter's drill at mounting and dismounting. My companion considered it a huge joke, but I resented deeply the indignity, and felt hot and chagrined when the drill was over.

Naturally these sudden and unwonted displays of excessive "officialdom" for mere trivialities did not conduce to perfect harmony, as betwixt the officers, non-coms. and men. On the contrary, unfortunately, they provoked frequent displays of temper. However, after a time both officers and non-coms—those who had indulged in such severity—seemed to tire of such petty tyranny, and almost imperceptibly dropped back into the old way of being trusted to do our duty without unnecessary annoyance and interference.

On July 23rd Colonel T. Roch arrived from Newcastle, and was invited by Colonel Mills to join him on a trek into the troubled district around Vryheid, and preparations were made for part of the column to move the following day.

During the afternoon a cricket match was played between picked teams from the Mounted Infantry and Imperial Yeomanry, which resulted in a victory for the former.

CHAPTER V.

THE ZULULAND PATROL.

Early on July 24th Colonel Mills' column, consisting of Wiggins' Mounted Infantry and the 34th Battalion of Yeomanry—excepting some details under Lieutenant Ritchie remaining behind in charge of the camp and baggage—left Vryheid for Pivaan's River, twenty miles distant.

The day was very overcast and rain fell during the afternoon. Our road lay north-east through a very mountainous district, many of the hills reaching to a height of several thousand feet, being scattered profusely over the surrounding landscape; conical, jagged, irregular and table-shaped, their deep scraggy escarpments giving them a wild and rugged grandeur. In places our road narrowed to mere bridle-paths which hung on the lower faces of huge mountains.

During a mid-day halt we were compelled suddenly to shift our position owing to the long, dry grass igniting by some mischance, the flames sweeping in a furious, hot, devouring wave right through our lines.

Since our arrival in Natal we had experienced much trouble with our mounts. Whether it was due to the previous severe campaigning, insufficient food, or want of proper care, I cannot say definitely, but several of the animals were constantly needing the farrier-sergeant's attention, some having to be destroyed. One

common complaint was the "botts," a parasite indigenous in the veld grass, and by this means found lodgment within the horses' stomachs, upon which it fed. The vets. had recourse to various cures but without any marked success.

For several days while at Vryheid my horse had manifested developing symptoms of this particular complaint, and, after a few hours' travel during this day's trek, it betrayed unmistakeable signs of incapacity for further effort. Accordingly the farrier-sergeant ordered me to follow slowly with the baggage—an independent mode of travelling, allowing some degree of immunity from restraint, which I much enjoyed.

One sad sight during the journey much impressed us. We passed a family of Boers—men, women, and children—who had recently returned to their roofless, dismantled farmhouse. Although they looked very sullen, they were nevertheless bravely endeavouring to eke out some sort of existence in an outspanned covered waggon and tent close by the building. Similar sights were to be seen throughout the war-devastated country.

At five o'clock in the afternoon we outspanned close to a fine stone bridge spanning the Pivaan River. Our camp was at an extreme altitude in a very mountainous region on the Zululand border, and where the successive giant peaks towered away northward and eastward.

Some difficulty and delay arose while pitching our tent. While we were busily engaged in its erection, an officer's servant—requiring a mallet—took advantage of the uncertain light to creep around and suddenly seize ours. Evidently he imagined he had done so unobserved, but detecting him in the act I chased him across to the officers' lines and endeavoured forcibly to regain its possession. Unfortunately for me, however, an officer who was standing by and had overheard our altercation—but whom in my excitement and the failing light I had not previously observed—then interposed, and with an aggravating cynical smile compelled me to assist his men in erecting his tent—and with the disputed mallet too!

Our column encamped for a week in this healthy locality. The immediate country was patrolled in every direction, the natives interviewed, and the unwelcome intelligence impressed upon them that the British were not going to restore their country to them—*i.e.*, that portion ceded by Dinizulu to the Boers in 1884—but were going to uphold their late enemies, the Boers, in their very questionable title to the lands they held.

Amongst other places, Paul Pietersdorp and the battlefield of Holkrantz* (Matatschan) were visited. In the kraals that were visited, such at least as had not been destroyed by the Boers, there was not an able-

*See previous chapter.

bodied man who had not taken part in the fight, and the burghers who were returning to re-occupy their former abodes were only sheltered by a tent, and entirely unprotected against these hostile natives excepting for a gun or two. Nothing but the sight of our strong column and its patrols could have kept the natives from murdering every Boer in the locality at that time.

Parties of the column also visited and bathed in the natural mineral baths in the district. Owing to their curative properties these valuable springs during recent years have been much visited by sufferers, who have derived great benefit from their excellent therapeutic qualities. They are situated close to each other, one thermal (105° Fahrenheit) and the other cold. This water has a pleasant taste, is wholesome, soft and odourless, and valuable for both medicinal and domestic purposes.

The water contains the following properties :—

Silicia	1.45 grains.
Iron oxide and alumina	0.68 „
Lime carbonate	1.38 „
Soda „	3.50 „
„ sulphate	4.95 „
„ chloride (common salt)...	5.84 „
Magnesia sulphate	a trace.

When the completion of the Dundee-Vryheid railway line is an accomplished fact, these mineral baths will

be easily accessible to visitors from all parts of South Africa.

One of our troopers was blessed (or otherwise) with a prodigious appetite. He was a growing lad, and his voracious proclivities greatly astonished everyone. Frequently his insatiable efforts to appease adequately the cravings of his "innards" created unlimited mirth. It was simply marvellous the enormity of human "fodder" he could comfortably put away. Usually our daily ration of bread or biscuit was issued individually at breakfast. Our ever-hungry friend generally disposed of his allowance at one sitting and begged for more from the men at the other meals. Not infrequently he pleaded successfully with the quarter-master-sergeant for a little extra allowance.

While I was the officer's cook at Umbana he was continually "fishing around" my cookhouse for any odd scraps of food. One night he entered bringing a two-pound loaf which the quarter-master had given him—probably out of compassion. Without further ado he cut and toasted slice after slice, and in this manner demolished nearly the whole loaf before he left! Upon another occasion he enquired whether it was possible to make a porridge from oats and mealies. Probably that accounted for the report, which got about later, that he had attempted to allay the pangs of hunger by eating his horse's food! It was further announced that he had overhauled a pile of "weavilly" biscuits which had been discarded as unfit for food. He was

sure to avail himself of every opportunity of purchasing extra food. Once he bought a box of soup tablets. Some he cooked according to the printed directions, but the majority he chewed in their raw state as though they were sweets.

Usually we received our "extras" (jam, cheese, and bacon) in parties of four men, each section generally, by a mutual arrangement, "mucking in" (sharing) together and bearing an individually proportionate payment for any extra luxuries that might be purchased. Our little clique consisted of our always-hungry-and-never-satisfied friend, two chums and myself. But our partnership proved so entirely unsatisfactory, and was soon dissolved. Three of us strongly objected to the fourth continually having the lion's share to the natural detriment of ourselves.

But the climax was reached while at Pivaan's Bridge. The troops returned at sunset after an all-day patrol. They had just finished a hearty meal of stew when two cooks from the mounted infantry—who had taken a deep interest in our young friend's stupendous gastronomic accomplishments—brought to our tent a large, steaming-hot flour and mealie-meal pudding for our comrade to tackle. Apart from its very gluttonous aspect, it was a decidedly interesting performance. Certainly he was somewhat at a disadvantage through having partaken, just previously, of a hearty meal, but without further ado he attacked the stodgy mass with much deliberation, being allowed two

one-pound tins of jam to help it down. He demolished more than half of it!

On July 30th we returned by another route to Vryheid. My horse being now quite unfit for riding I accompanied another yeoman on a waggon. We passed close to Hlobane—a precipitous hill arising from the veld, and located some twelve miles east of Vryheid—where General Buller won his Victoria Cross in 1879. Some difficult drifts had to be negotiated, and at one of them the shelving bank had an exceptionally steep gradient whereon the waggons required much assistance from us. In places the road was very rough and full of ruts, and our native leader and driver appeared somewhat incapable of managing their respective team of mules. At one part of the journey, while skirting the base of a kopje, the track was intersected with innumerable small dongas running parallel with or transversely across our path. The “near-side” wheels of our waggon sliding over the edge of one of these, the conveyance was nearly overturned. Fortunately, anticipating a spill, we sprang off just in time, and quickly assisting at the wheels averted a seemingly nasty mishap.

The next few days were spent at kit and equipment inspections. Several deficiencies were discovered, especially among the ammunition. We were also informed that a recent Army order directed that all deficiencies would have to be met by the losers them-

selves. During the trek my bayonet, scabbard and "frog" were lost, which must have slipped from my belt while riding. Fortunately the bayonet and scabbard were found later, but eventually I was mulcted in the sum of two-and-fourpence for the missing "frog."

At this period a troop of the newly-formed Natal Border Police (which have since been incorporated into the Natal Police) were temporarily quartered in Vryheid. The life in this corps appeared to be exceptionally pleasant and the conditions of service extremely favourable. Every man on enrolment enlisted for a period of twelve months' service (or longer if desired), and the remuneration was five shillings a day, with full rations for a trooper, the increment rising by scale according to the rank held. Several men in our battalion expressed their desire to join as soon as their services in the Yeomanry could be dispensed with. Indeed, one Lieutenant in "D" Squadron endeavoured to raise a troop to join this force, and a list of eligible applicants was drawn up.*

At one morning parade lists were made of all the yeomen who desired to remain in South Africa, with the names of the employers (if any) who had offered them employment; also those who wished to return to England on the completion of their term of military service. Naturally these measures created all sorts of

*Upon the completion of our Zululand trek the subject was further discussed, but eventually abandoned—owing to our battalion shortly after being placed in quarantine on account of an outbreak of scarlet fever.

wild rumours that we were predestined to an early disbandment.

One afternoon while taking our horses to water—we always rode them bare-backed on these occasions—the mount I happened to be riding showed an impatient anxiety to waste no time in reaching the river, while the two “led” horses manifested as great an objection to this “speeding up,” and with equal obstinacy stolidly followed at their own pace. Under such adverse conditions conciliation to either party was manifestly impossible. Much difficulty was experienced in restraining the impetuosity of my mount with one hand, while holding the two laggards with the other, who nearly dragged me off rearwards. This unequal contest culminated when, to save myself, the two horses were very reluctantly abandoned, and all my attention and energies devoted to the horse I was riding. The resultant sudden impetus flung me on to its neck, and before completely recovering my equilibrium, my horse, feeling the reins slack and momentarily freed from further restraint, shot forward like a spring released. He had scarcely covered more than a few yards, when, finding further progress barred by a waggon, he halted abruptly, at the same time suddenly “ducking” his head and elevating his flanks. Of course, no self-respecting trooper could maintain a firm seat under such continually varying and unfair conditions. The natural sequence was a graceful “three-quarter-somersault.” The spectators applauded my acrobatic feat, but sug-

gested the performance would have been more complete by bowing acknowledgments to my audience. My horses didn't wait, however, so the "riderless" trooper had to tramp on alone and meet them at the river.

The next day our horses, while being driven in from grazing, stampeded over the camp, creating much excitement.

It was during this month (August) that a new cook being required by our Squadron officers' mess, I was offered the post, upon the recommendation of my troop officer. After some cogitation the berth was accepted, but conditionally to primarily giving it a trial. But it soon proved to be anything but the "snug billet" I had been assured it was. At Umbana I was allowed a free hand in this department. Here at Vryheid my independent action was greatly restricted, and the proper performance of my several duties as chef much curtailed. With the seven officers—including the colonel and the major—their servants and grooms, we made a party of nearly twenty to cook for. My merely elementary knowledge and brief experience of the culinary art proved rather inadequate for the efficient preparation of the several courses daily required, especially as the cook laboured under distinctly adverse conditions, and some of the officers had their own particular fads and fancies to be studied. The servants certainly proffered their services, but one soon discovered it was not infrequently a case of "too many cooks," etc.

Fuel was very scarce—mostly wood and “mist”—and it required some discrimination to satisfactorily eke out our scanty supply. The mess supply officer urged me to use it sparingly. When my back was turned an “obliging” servant would heap it upon the fire wholesale, and then words would ensue between us. Later we secured Colonel Mills’s cooking-stove, but it belonged to the hungry variety and consumed a lot of fuel. As “chef” I was scarcely a success, and several times threatened to resign my post, but at the earnest solicitations of the others, remained.

One day some flour was obtained, and the servants urged me to try my hand at pastry making. Oh! all ye who have enjoyed the appetising and luscious products of the pastry-cook’s art and skill, have ye ever tried to make pastry? To the uninitiated it possesses disadvantages, as I quickly discovered. I flatter myself at my ability to prepare and cook a simple meal satisfactorily—but pastry! Nevertheless, the task was valorously tackled. My audience squatted around and waited developments. To begin with, there was no dripping, lard or fat of any description; so, without further ado, some water was mixed with the flour, from which a sticky, stodgy mass was obtained, which I endeavoured to knead. Yes, tried certainly, but with disastrous results. The horrible, sticky stuff entwined all over my fingers and hands up to the wrists, and clung to me with a truly affectionate consistency. But, despite its lovable disposition, it was horribly

messy, and very awkward too, when I wanted to rub my itching nose. The operations had to be constantly suspended while my slippery fingers were scraped. The dough was kneaded, coaxed, banged and pounded with great animation, but continued, in spite of all my blandishments, to embrace me with a most lover-like confidence. It was considered advisable to temporise a little. With a piece of rounded wood I endeavoured to roll it out in that easy way so often seen done at home. Surely that would be simplicity itself? But that dough was obstinate. Instead of spreading out into a nice, even thickness, as any sensible dough should have done, it persistently folded itself round and round my improvised rolling-pin, compelling me to continually stop and unroll it.

By this time the "floury mass" was developing a beautifully (?) natural colour. My audience enjoyed thoroughly watching its progress. The cook was getting desperate. One fellow—whom I discovered later to be a baker by trade—was intensely interested in my efforts, and commented freely thereon. Thoroughly exasperated with my audience and the "stupid stuff," I advised him to complete the task. He did. The officers tasted the cooked pasty—we finished it. It went down somehow. My chums advised a further attempt the next day, but met with an absolute refusal.

We were joined on August 8th by the remainder of

*Tis incident occurred at our camp at Waterval.

“ B ” Squadron, which had hitherto remained at Newcastle, including Lieutenant Trotter’s troop—colloquially known among us as the “ Die hards.” Only a few men were now remaining at our headquarters at Newcastle; also some extra men at Umbana blockhouse attending to sick remounts.

During the afternoon the trial sports for the following day’s gymkhana were held. The night was very stormy, and during the early hours preceding dawn, several tents collapsed, to the great discomfort of the inmates. Ours, although very dilapidated, successfully weathered the storm.

This day being the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII., a great crowd of mounted and unmounted troops assembled in the market square, where an open-air forenoon thanksgiving service was held at eleven o’clock. Then followed a march past of the troops before the officer commanding the Vryheid garrison, his staff, and other officials; also some volley firing. Sports were held during the afternoon on the racecourse, at which both military and civilian inhabitants took part. The events included foot, V.C., and children’s races, tugs-of-war, jumping, and wrestling contests on horseback.

Among the numerous spectators were several groups of typical Boers, many of the men wearing deep crapebands on their hats. One well-dressed, intelligent looking and interesting group, consisting of members of both sexes, was pointed out as the family of General

Louis Botha, the Commandant-General of the late Transvaal Boer forces.

The evening turned out wretchedly wet, but, despite the unpropitious weather, pyrotechnic displays took place in the town. In the camps the officers in their respective messes, and the troops in their tents with their rum ration, toasted His Majesty's health and indulged in "sing-songs," jollity and light-hearted gaiety until a late hour.

Colonel Mills, having been appointed to a district command, departed from Vryheid on August 10th. The column was then placed under the command of Colonel Roch, and continued the duty of patrolling the disaffected district.

In accordance with these plans the column under Colonel Roch, on the morning of the 12th, left Vryheid for Waterval, and, as on the previous occasion, some few details remained behind as our supplementary base. My horse being now quite unfit for trekking, a better conditioned animal was given me, but soon found it to be a terrible stumbler. Being on the officers' servants staff, we were assigned a position with the baggage guard, close to the waggon containing the officers' mess paraphernalia. This free-and-easy, independent riding was a decided improvement—personally at least—to travelling a long distance in troop formation.

After a brief mid-day halt we reached Waterval—some twenty-five miles to the east of Vryheid—at sundown, and outspanned by a stream near General Louis

Botha's farm. In this part the country was very rugged and mountainous, the air somewhat cooler but more bracing, probably due to our being at a higher altitude.

The district is rich in minerals, and coal of a very good quality has been found in abundance. In fact, the officers' servants made several pilgrimages across the river and returned with sacks of surface coal—a welcome addition to our hitherto scanty supply of fuel—although certainly we found it soft and apt to create a deal of smoke.

Apropos of the smoke nuisance, one terribly cold, gusty day great difficulty was experienced in cooking the meals. After attempting various expedients, we finally moved the stove into our tent, and thus, partially screened from the wind, I managed somehow to prepare the officers' evening repast. But for a time we were all smoked out of our habitation!

Almost daily the district was patrolled, and through the intermediary of the Colonial guide-interpreter—named Dyer—the Boers and natives were interviewed, the latter being warned against any display of hostility towards the former.

We were greatly amused one evening by the arrival of a Zulu headman dressed in what apparently was a cast-off European suit and an old straw hat. He was accompanied by his chief staff-officer, who wore an old coat, loin cloth, and a belt with a suspended bayonet. After an interview with the colonel and interpreter, the

adjutant took them to the quarter-master's stores and gave the headman a tin of biscuits and a tin of jam. The latter made his attendant carry these propitiatory gifts—he apparently not objecting to this arrangement—and judging by his broad, smiling countenance, considering the gifts the most important part of the interview.

On August 16th a sad mishap occurred to one of our men, which unfortunately ended fatally. Some distance below the camp the stream reached the edge of a rocky semi-circular chasm about 100 feet deep. The deep pool below was thus walled-in by rocky heights, with dark, frowning surfaces, down which the water tumbled in bubbling, fairy-like cascades. As very little sunshine seemed to penetrate this natural amphitheatre, the pool was very cold at this period of the year. The sides opposite to the waterfall crumbled away from the rocky wall and were lost amid a maze of uneven ground and reeds, the bank being but a few inches above water level. This spot was naturally freely patronised by the yeomen as an ideal bathing resort.

On this particular afternoon we were startled suddenly by Lieutenant Trotter, of "B" Squadron, riding hastily into camp and calling for volunteers, as Corporal Low, of "B" Squadron, was drowning. The pool was quickly surrounded by an eager and excited throng. It appeared that the non-com. whilst swimming was seen to disappear suddenly beneath the surface. As he

failed to re-appear help was immediately summoned. Several swimmers stripped and repeatedly dived at the located spot without success. Finding the icy-cold pool quickly benumbing my limbs, I was soon compelled to leave the water. But three men of our troop—Sergeant C. Davies, Lance-Corporal D. Whelan, and Trooper T. Kane—manfully persevered, diving again and again into the deep, cold waters from a narrow, rocky ledge.

After many attempts Whelan dived again, and as he rose to the surface he excitedly exclaimed that he had found him. Later he related how on reaching the bottom he unexpectedly touched the corpse and experienced a most uncanny sensation, which quite frightened him. Several further fruitless attempts at rescue were immediately undertaken. Finally, Whelan and Kane, diving together, succeeded in bringing up the missing man, amid the applause of the unlookers, and, assisted by Sergeant Davies, swam ashore with their human burden.

The medical officer endeavoured to resuscitate our poor comrade, but soon ceased his efforts, declaring that as the man had been submerged for nearly an hour he was dead, and gave orders for the immediate removal of the corpse. But many of us deeply deplored the officer's somewhat hasty decision, feeling assured that a few minutes' work at the resuscitation of the apparently drowned was totally inadequate, when it should have been persevered with for at least an hour.

Being under military discipline, we were unable to controvert his decision.

Our hearts felt very heavy and bitter as the mournful procession slowly bore its sad burden back to the camp. One incident particularly impressed me. Two Zulus, clad in their savage garb, and who understood the cause of our grief, reverently pointed heaven-wards, thus typifying, in their simple faith, that they believed the spirit of our poor comrade was in Heaven. One admired such childlike, yet trusting faith.

Poor Low's funeral took place the following morning at eight o'clock, several officers and men attending the obsequies to pay their last respects to his memory. I was impressed considerably, however, by the sergeant-major of his squadron sending to me for the loan of a prayer-book—required at the burial service. Our comrade was laid to rest near the camp and close to a farm.

An hour-and-a-half later we struck camp and trekked for a few miles in a south-westerly direction, and then turned sharply towards the east. Our road now lay over a broken and hilly district. One of the drifts was extremely difficult for the transport to cross. In the attempt our Scotch-cart containing some ammunition upset, but several willing hands soon righted and re-loaded it. Further on, near Scheepers Nek, another transport waggon was less fortunate and broke down completely. This mishap compelled the column to halt and outspan sooner than was intended.

The district around still continued very mountainous,

our camp being pitched in a valley surrounded by huge kopjes. As the road ahead ran through a nek we caught the full blast of the chilly wind which whistled through the pass like a gas blow-pipe.

Having a deficiency of pegs we attempted to erect our tent bivouac-wise with shortened poles, but the uncompromising, obstinate wind blew the canvas into a tangled heap, and then bellowed out its ample folds like a partially inflated balloon. One onlooker sarcastically enquired of the two servants struggling vainly beneath, when the balloon was going up. Finally, Lieutenant Ritchie good-naturedly gave a helping hand in completing the task.

We departed early on the following morning, leaving behind a few details to escort the waggons that had broken down on the previous day.

The general aspect of the surrounding country was exceedingly mountainous, the prevailing contour being studded with giant peaks and ranges rearing their lofty eminences all around us. Our road was rough and broken, and often-times very difficult to traverse. The transport, too, experienced some difficulty in crossing the spruits, where the drifts proved to be very long and steep. Whenever a waggon stuck at these places the niggers would excitedly belabour the poor mules, urging them forward with unearthly yells and fearful facial contortions, sufficient, one would imagine, to move the most refractory beast. During the passage of one particular waggon down an incline leading to

a drift, the off-side wheels of the vehicle deviated from the track, lurched up the steep side of the bank and upset the conveyance. The vehicle was filled with bales of forage, and a yeoman whose horse was sick, and who happened to be riding on the top of the fodder, was buried beneath the debris, fortunately being soon rescued, unhurt.

Later in the afternoon we climbed a ridge on the 'Ngomo range, and close to the Zululand border. This part of the country is traversed by several mountain chains: Kambula, Zungene, Hlobane, Thaba Kulu, 'Ngomo, Inhlatsatje, Babanango, etc. As viewed from this point the scenery was truly magnificent. In front and on either flank the glorious panorama of giant mountains stretching away before us was exquisite in its silent, yet solid grandeur and beauty. Although the afternoon was waning, the air was clear and dry, revealing, with sharp distinctness, the outlines of the mountains, their craggy prominences and krantzes and the deep valleys intersecting these mighty upheavals of Nature. Strength and beauty were blended in perfect harmony. Away in the distance these giant peaks and ranges seemed to melt into an azure haze.

For some minutes we were lost in wonder and amazement at the magnificent spectacle being thus slowly unfolded to our gaze. Words seemed to fail us in giving adequate expression of our appreciation of these natural beauties. The veld at this high altitude was cold and sour but very breezy and healthy withal.

But our horses—which were apparently only conscious of the prospect of reaching our next camping ground and indulging in a well-earned rest and meal and quite uninfluenced by these beauties of nature—trekked persistently forward, resenting any individual attempt to momentarily rein them in whilst we endeavoured to study with keener observation any particularly pleasing aspect from our coign of 'vantage.

At sunset, after trekking fourteen miles, we outspanned upon a broad expanse of veld which sloped down to a spruit some 500 yards from the camp.

About a mile before reaching this camp I observed that our presence caused a great commotion in some kraals near which we passed. Presently, from this collection of huts there emerged a Zulu chief dressed in a European tourist's costume (with knee-breeches and a trilby hat), mounted upon a Colonial pony, and accompanied by a large following afoot, who were mostly arrayed in their native clothes—although some few possessed either an old shabby coat or other garment. The majority were decked out in feathers, and carried knob-kerries, assegais and shields—the whole crowd, led by their chief, following hard after our column.

As this motley crew entered our camp they were met by the adjutant, and conducted by him to Colonel Roch and the guide-interpreter. The chief—named Khambi—having handed over his mount to one of his attendants, stood conferring with the officer and guide, whilst the remainder of his followers, at the beginning

of this conversation, simultaneously raised their right hands, grunted very audibly, and with much gravity made deep obeisances and articulated afresh, which subsided, as with great deliberation and solemnity they squatted in a semi-circle just behind their chief. Several Zulus, principally the elder and less active men, who had been unable to keep up the rapid pace set up by their chief, and who arrived after the conference had begun, stood behind the colonel, and performed the same routine of hand-raising, gruntings and obeisances before squatting with the others.

The conference lasted for some time, and at its conclusion the chief suddenly faced his dusky subjects and harangued them with great animation for some minutes. When he had made an end of speaking, his audience, with one accord, rose to their feet, again raised their right hands, and all loudly grunted in a variety of octaves, which produced a weird discord. Whether these oral sounds were indicative of approval or disapproval it was hard to determine.

The result of the conference was quite satisfactory, and the chief promised to do all he could to make his men work for the Boers, even going so far as to say he would punish them himself if they did not.

Few of us who were witnesses of this amusing and interesting scene could keep a straight face, but the grave, dignified countenances of the Zulus betrayed no such outward sign of mirth. Evidently they considered the conference and the proper performance of their



COLONEL ROCH INTERVIEWING ZULU CHIEF KHAMBI.



ZULU WARRIORS NEAR 'NGOMO.

PLATE VI.

various forms of salutation far too serious an affair for the exhibition of such levity. At its termination the conclave broke up, and the natives, again led by their mounted chief, took their departure. One yeoman jocularly remarked that the chief had come to demand satisfaction for our trespassing upon his territory.

A scene of this description and our constant contact with the natives afforded us opportunities for learning much of their characteristics. Apart from their hereditary nature, the Zulus are a very superstitious race. Their witch doctors, with their really wonderful performance of magic and jugglery, are still feared by them; even European travellers have also been much mystified by their amazing legerdemain and uncanny performances suggestive of witchery. According to the late Mr. Leslie's work on the Zulus—among whom he worked as a missionary—he was as greatly puzzled by these seers as were the early Jesuits in America by the Jossakeeds, and Herne on the Copper River. An exceedingly clever and cunning class, they have cured persons bitten by snakes and various diseases, their *modus operandi* being simply with native herbs, roots, and barks of trees.

The Zulu is also a great mimic. When living among Europeans he copies with extraordinary assiduity their various mannerisms, habits, gait and dress. Old garments are much prized by them, and the more gaudy and incongruous the costume, the greater their pleasure. If living within the vicinity of

towns, on Sundays they will sometimes blossom forth arrayed in all the glory of new clothes, wearing gilt chains and jauntily carrying walking-sticks, all of which they have probably purchased with their earnings at local stores.

Our camp now lay but a few miles from the 'Ngomo Bush, and it was rumoured that the guide had informed our Colonel that wild animals still existed in the vicinity. Apropos of this, an amusing incident occurred. A yeoman, while returning at dusk to camp from the river, was suddenly horrified at hearing the light footfall of some animal rapidly approaching him from behind. With the knowledge of the possible local existence of wild beasts, he was evidently too frightened to ascertain what animal it was, for he fled terrified towards the camp, with the unknown quadruped closely following in his rear. When well within the confines of the camp he summoned sufficient courage to look behind and discovered the cause of his scare. It was a small dog belonging to one of the officers!

During the next two days, as we did not remove our camp, parties of officers went on hunting expeditions, anticipating some big game, but their bags generally consisted only of a few birds. We were a little more fortunate, as one of the servants had, during our last day's trek, secured a small **kid**, which he made into a pie and we thoroughly enjoyed.

On August 20th a convoy of supplies was brought from Vryheid by Lieutenant Green-Price, and on the

following morning we struck camp and trekked back to Scheepers Nek. The servants' tent having been mislaid at one of the previous camps, we slept under a tarpaulin bivouac. From under this improvised shelter we were rather slack in turning out at reveillé, which greatly annoyed Major Chitty. He gave us a piece of his mind thereon, and ordered the bivouac to be immediately pulled down, whether we were dressed or not. Later he privately gave his servant an admonition upon the Army regulations with reference to the time allowed for striking camps and moving off when on active service, etc.

Upon assuming command of the column in the stead of Colonel Mills, Colonel Roch had received orders to take not less than 200 men in a patrol. While he interviewed the Boers and natives in the different localities through which we passed, our patrol trekked in a seemingly aimless but certainly monotonous fashion over the veld. This continual wandering, with apparently no settled plan, was at times tedious work for all. Had we known something at least of the objective of each day's trek our interest would have received a stimulus. But for military reasons it was expedient to keep us in continual ignorance of the plans. Naturally this very lack of news served only to increase our curiosity, and all kinds of wildly impossible rumours gained credence. This much we knew, however, that in this disaffected district there was the possibility of a native outbreak,

and at times we were on the *qui vive*, anticipating fighting. But the constant secrecy of it all occasionally reduced us to a state akin to ennui. Thus our daily existence became nomadic; trekking hither and thither, never knowing beforehand—excepting a privileged few—the next day's programme. Time and place were frequently synonymous with oblivion.

During our trek to Scheepers Nek, and while crossing a stream, a mounted native's horse slipped upon a boggy portion of the bank and rolled over, completely ducking the unfortunate nigger. A mounted infantryman almost immediately shared the same fate, while a yeoman escaped a similar wetting, being warned just in time by the hilarious shouts of the onlookers.

A certain non-con. had often made himself particularly obnoxious to the officers' servants, which obviously they much resented. Upon our arrival in camp it was reported that by some oversight this non-com.'s kit bag had been left lying that morning upon the veld at our vacated camp, which information naturally caused great mirth among the servants.

On the next day the mounted infantry left for Vryheid, preparatory to their journey down-country and sailing for India. Their departure was signalled by hearty farewells, for, whilst trekking together, we had found them good-hearted comrades. Our troop secured one of their juvenile Zulu camp attendants, named "Ping-pong," who was an exceedingly useful lad.

Colonel Roch accompanied the mounted infantry into

Vryheid, returning in the evening with some stores, also a detachment escorting a maxim gun. To some the arrival of this weapon gave rise to grave speculations, as conclusive evidence of impending trouble with the Zulus; while others averred its presence merely denoted a precautionary measure. Probably there was some necessity for this precaution, especially as we heard that the somewhat astounding news had preceded us to Vryheid that our column had been attacked and cut up by Zulus!

This same day I vacated my post as officers' cook and returned to my troop, receiving an ovation from my tent comrades upon rejoining them. Certainly, I was not altogether sorry to return to duty with my troop. Cooking for officers may have possessed certain advantages and perquisites. But on the other hand it was not devoid of disadvantages. It was well-nigh impossible to give satisfaction in preparing so many courses with such a meagre allowance of fuel and each servant considering it his bounden duty to personally instruct me in the art of "how *not* to do it," with frequent squabbles over their egotistical and contrary opinions. Added to this, the complaints of the mess officer when, as a natural outcome of these petty squabbles, the meals were not infrequently late or improperly cooked, that I was mightily glad of the opportunity to get away and leave them to their own cavillings and bickerings. To be an officers' cook when on active service is not always a "cushy billet."

Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks and the incongeniality of the work, one felt some gratification at having given the job a fair trial.

Whenever a man was returned to duty from a "staff billet" (officers' servant, cook, etc.), it was noticeable how very quickly the orderly-sergeant "warned" him to do a turn on one of the guards, picquets or fatigues. No doubt this method of working the "roster" was done in common fairness to the other men in the squadron, despite the objections frequently raised by the men returned to duty. In accordance with this apparently unwritten rule, the day following my return "to duty," I was detailed for grazing guard, and main guard for the next.

The early morning of August 25th found us again "on trek," and those of us composing the main guard were appointed as the escort of the colonel's waggon—an easy, pleasant duty.

One noteworthy incident as revealing the soldiers' innate capacity for humour needs recording. At the previous morning's parade our troop officer had censured some of the men because of their unshaven appearance. Cogitating upon the matter later they resolved upon a certain high-handed course. Upon this particular morning's parade the officer was astonished to find that his troop had not only complied with his order to shave their chins, but had also removed their moustachios—at least, those who possessed this hirsute "adornment." A corporal and a trooper, however,

had refused to be coerced by the majority, and were promptly dubbed "traitors." The astonished officer appealed to Captain Buckley who was standing near, with: "I say, Skipper, what do you think of this lot?" Recovering from his momentary surprise at the men's somewhat altered facial appearance, the captain smilingly suggested that probably the men had been smitten by one of the Zulu chiefs' daughters, upon whom they were exceedingly anxious to create a favourable impression. Some who had sacrificed their moustachios looked awfully comical, and their altered facial expressions made them the recipients of various complimentary(?) comments. For a time we went under the sobriquet of the "Bald-faced Brigade." Being clean-shaven always, I was considered a member of this new force without the necessity of undergoing any elaborate formalities. But a few days later several looked very scrubby and tramp-like when their hair began to re-appear.

Trekking on this particular day one of the "guard" unfortunately was unable, when leaving camp—through an oversight on the part of one of the sergeants—to secure the mid-day feed for his mount. At the noon halt there was none to give it, neither could any be obtained from his troop sergeant. Poor beast! But a merciful man is said to be merciful to his beast. I don't know whether this particular yeoman was imbued to a greater degree with this characteristic principle than is to be found in the generality of horse lovers. At

any rate, after having so patiently borne him for several miles, he realised that his nag was certainly entitled to something more substantial than an empty nosebag. For his own frugal meal he possessed one biscuit only, half of which was shared with the famished quadruped. Half an Army biscuit is not exactly a sumptuous repast for a tired, hungry horse, but this was supplemented with some spilled oats which the yeoman scraped together from around the transport mules.

While crossing a difficult spruit a sad accident occurred. One of the waggons was descending the sharp declivity at the drift when one side of the vehicle lurched up the deep side of the cutting. This sudden tilt threw the native driver from his seat on the waggon in front of the forewheel. The transport animals drawing their burden unchecked, the lumbering wheel passed over the poor fellow's neck, killing him instantly. His remains were carried to our next camp (where we outspanned late that afternoon) and interred at sunset at a convenient spot upon the veld, several natives following his bier to the grave and paying their last respects to his memory. This unfortunate native was a Christian lad, and frequently at eventide was to be found reading his Bible under a waggon.

An encouraging characteristic feature of the Christianized natives in South Africa is their genuinely fearless profession of their new-found Faith. Not infrequently those on transport duty were heard chanting

some familiar hymn, often to a concertina accompaniment, as they gathered round their camp fires or lay beneath their waggons at night. Their pious simplicity would shame many professing Christians at home.

Many of the natives who were employed by the Transport Department during the war retained their own names, and pronounced as far as possible according to their native dialect. Others possessed Anglicised names, usually adopted from the days of the week or the months of the year. Thus not a few were classified as January, July, September, etc. Invariably the natives were ardent followers of "my lady Nicotine," and would barter almost anything within reason for tobacco. Unfortunately, not a few betrayed a marked partiality for strong drink—a craving too often, I fear, learned from the white man.

The blacks habitually grease their bodies—exactly for what reason I could never clearly ascertain. In the warm weather this continual anointing of their bodies caused an offensively rank effluvia, and under such conditions intercourse with them was not always desirable. A redeeming feature about the natives was their strong, sound, exquisite, pearly-white teeth, which they cleansed after every meal with great care, their *modus operandi* usually consisting of a thorough scouring with a small piece of wood and water.

On this day's trek we covered some twenty miles, having left a small detachment at Scheepers Nek, and at an early hour on August 26th we departed from our

second camp, "B" Squadron (152nd Company), however, remaining behind.

The reason for leaving these small detachments at the different camps *en route* was to ensure a connecting link, and thereby establish with the column a comparatively efficient means of communication with Vryheid in case of necessity.

Our route led us past our previous camping ground where the interesting interview with the Zulu chief Khambi and his staff had taken place a few days before. Safely across the drift we slowly and laboriously climbed our hilly and torturous way, as the steep and uneven road, filled with loose and partially-embedded boulders, rendered travelling exceedingly difficult. It was very hard and dangerous work for the heavily laden, lumbering transport. Numerous halts ensued. Our troop being the "advance waggon guard," we were frequently compelled to dismount and assist the vehicles over the worst portions of the road. After struggling uphill for several hours over a wild and rugged track, we reached a plateau, amid the mountains, several acres in extent, where the ground was less broken than the surrounding country. Advantage was taken of its suitability for camping.

Our elevation was several thousand feet above the sea level. Away to our right the plateau terminated abruptly at a steep, rocky wall. This gigantic, natural barrier rose perpendicularly to a height of several hundred feet, and frowned down upon us with a grim

but silent and solid grandeur. The plateau was a natural terrace in this mountainous range, and bounded near its extreme edge by the roadway. Beyond this it sloped gently at first and then fell away with a sharp declivity, the rocky ground below in many places being split asunder by castellated crags.

As (according to report) monkeys and snakes abounded upon the mountain above us, we were cautioned to be expeditious in our rambles, but despite our natural curiosity to discover some of these objects of natural history, few specimens were seen.

The horses were watered at a spot situated half-a-mile further along the road. At this point it narrowed to a mere bridle-path—a narrow ledge which clung to the face of the rocky wall, and with many curves closely following its bold contours. Continuing our way downwards, it required some degree of caution upon our part, with our “led” horses, to negotiate safely this very narrow, steep and rough declivity, especially when passing those who had been ahead of us and were returning. Presently we heard the soft murmur of falling water, which pleasant sound increased in volume as we advanced. As we rounded a bend in the road we suddenly happened upon a small, shaded dell—an ideal bower—with a delightful abundance of ferns, cacti, and foliage growing with a natural, promiscuous luxury and beauty, saturated by the glistening spray and emitting an exquisite aroma of earth and evergreen—a gardener’s paradise. This sylvan glade

was a pleasing contrast to the usually sordid and monotonous veld.

Simultaneously our mounts, which had hitherto been proceeding at their cautious, jogging pace, pricked up their ears; neighed joyously as the grateful, fragrant scent of the spring water was wafted by the zephyr breezes to their dilated nostrils; perceptibly quickened their lagging pace, pulled hard at their bits, frantically straining the riders' arms to near dislocation at the shoulder sockets in their well-nigh hopeless endeavour to restrain them as they collided with the crowd jammed together on the narrow, rocky, pathway ledge overhanging the deep gorge upon our left. Then suddenly—quite disregarding their owners' now futile tugging at the straining and almost snapping bridle reins—charging recklessly forward into the chaos of wheeling and retiring horses who had already taken their fill, and thereby adding to the general clatter and confusion in their insensate desire to assuage their thirst at this delightful stream.

Down a rocky cleft from the heights above the water tumbled in wee cascades, bubbling and splashing, amid a sheet of spray. This continued action of the water had formed a natural, rocky basin wherein was collected a plentiful supply of deliciously clear, cool running water which the horses thoroughly enjoyed. Poor beasts! They could not often indulge in such a treat.

But our whole attention was engaged with our excited, impulsive animals and the avoidance of possible

accidents, to study overmuch these natural beauties. Nevertheless, occasional glimpses revealed fresh marvels to our wondering gaze. Overflowing the basin where the animals slaked their thirst, the stream tumbled down a rocky gorge with a monotonous, sobbing moan.

Scarcely had we left this delightfully sequestered spot, when, like a transformation scene, the whole landscape underwent a speedy change. A persistently drizzling, clinging, penetrating rain set in, considerably damping our ardour for the beauteous revelation of Nature upon which we had previously gazed. Ah! how readily we poor mortals are influenced by extraneous influences—and the weather!

Nature unravels her secrets, displays her beauties, or from mountainous summits we behold, spread out before us with panoramic effect, a verdant carpet, like an entwining garland, encircling the fair earth with all its inexpressibly wondrous detail, interwoven with exquisite beauty, effulgence and perfection. But the human soul—while wrapt in joyous contemplation, or looking with smiling complacency upon Nature, his whole being thrilled, stirred to a panegyric of praise—oftentimes degenerates a cultured mind when seeking by effrontery, self-aggrandisement, limited knowledge, whimsical fantasies, succinct satires and the mistaken assurance of the often misapplied phrase, “The teachings of science,” to supplant and even expunge the

omnipresence, the omniscient purposes of the Almighty Creator.

Man is a strangely living organism, endowed with an immortal soul, yet withal so enigmatical, cynical, credulous and inconsistent; so apt to more readily respond to baser desires rather than to his higher and nobler aspirations. Human temperaments are so mercurial. Absorbed, satiated, wreathed in Nature's smiles and pleasant environments, the human mind can revel in contented bliss and sublimity, indulge in poetic effulgence, or extol her praises at the shrine of the muses. But remove his pleasant associations, his contentment and erstwhile happier surroundings. Blot out the sunshine. Let Nature frown, wrapping the smiling landscape in a clinging murkiness, transforming the mountains into repulsive fastnesses, the hitherto delightful plains and valleys into dank, sour grasslands, the trees into gaunt spectres, and enveloping the whole country with a cold, pitiless, misty rain, enough to depress the most jovial temperament—and man degenerates into despondency and gloom. It is a transient descent from the sublime to the ridiculous!

In camp our spirits were similarly impressed by the effects of this externally oppressive gloom. Our appetites were ravenous, and intensified by the prospect of a ration of bacon with our fresh meat. But the pitiless, persistent drizzle considerably damped our ardour, likewise our dinners. After long continued efforts

over a smoky, spluttering fire, we were compelled to eat our meal in a half-sodden, half-cooked condition. The meal was not a success. Under our canvas quibbles, grumblings and sarcasms were dominant. Most of our grievances were trivial, pettifogging. The badly cooked meal and the rain were blamed for our perversity, fretful irritation and peevishness, our inclination to blame everybody and everything but ourselves. For the nonce we had forgotten the scenic beauties recently admired; our personal and gastronomic comforts—or rather the want of them—were the predominating factors which had thus soured our erstwhile happy contentment.

How often external influences have a marked effect upon our lives—for good or evil. They raise us to a higher plane—or bring us to a state of unreason. Environment and opportunity may ennoble or make us strangely subversive and intolerant, ever ready to perceive a wrong, an imaginary insult or offended dignity, shattering our highest ideals, our noblest motives. It was ever thus. Human nature is so sensitive, our bigoted egotism often-times blinding our saner reason; we constantly fail to understand each other, words are misconstrued and motives misinterpreted. *Umbrage* is taken at words or actions when no offence is intended or even contemplated. As a natural sequence friendships are severed, good intentions are frequently abandoned, while rancour and bitterness will probably displace happiness, contentment and filial love and duty.

But to resume my narrative.

It was a cold, stormy, black night. One could scarcely see a yard ahead. To leave the tent for only a short distance and find it again incurred much trouble, time and patience. As the hours passed the storm increased. Exposed on the bleak sides of the mountain, at an altitude of several thousands of feet, we felt the full force of the gale, which strained persistently at our "guy" ropes, disturbed our slumbers, and even invaded the land of our dreams. One restless, nervous yeoman lying near, aroused me about midnight, desiring me to slip outside, tighten up the tent ropes, and save the canvas from collapsing. Being clothed only in my shirt, and annoyed at his disturbing my sleep (as it was only his fervid imagination—nothing being amiss with our tent), I was in no fit mood to comply with his request, and angrily bade him not to disturb me but to attend to it himself. Another talked in his sleep. He dreamed of Zulus, incoherently informing his partially aroused comrades that the natives were coming to attack us.

Indeed, had this been the Zulus' intention they could not have chosen a more auspicious time. It would have been comparatively easy for them, in such deep darkness, to have penetrated our camp and slaughtered everyone of us. But our equanimity was not seriously disturbed by these imaginary dangers.

By dawn the storm had subsided, although heavy clouds still dulled the landscape. A few hours later

the sky cleared and the damp, shivering country was flooded with a profusion of bright sunlight. The air was cold, clear and highly exhilarating, revealing, with a wonderful intensity, the sharply defined mountains.

At nine o'clock on the same morning (August 27th) "A" Squadron, under Colonel Roch, Major Chitty, Captain Buckley and troop officers and the guide, left the camp for a patrol into this—to us—new region. After watering our horses at the delightfully leafy, fairy-like glen, we crossed the rock basin and, in Indian file, climbed a steep, rocky defile on the opposite side.

Arrived at the summit, a magnificent panorama was suddenly unfolded to us. Looking backward we could see that our winding pathway, leading from the camp to the stream, literally overhung a deep gorge. Small, thin trees clung creeper-like to the crags and rocky projections, and slanting outwards endeavouring to catch the shafts of sunlight which glinted through crevices in several places, shedding around irradiant patches. The broken ground on our left fell away in a series of ravines and precipices covered with a profusion of stunted trees. Here and there were visible the shimmering gleam of silver strands as the stream, winding in and out on its downward course, came into view. Lower down the sodden, verdure-carpeted slopes appeared to melt away into the plain far below us, scintillating in many variegated colours and lustrous beauty as the sunlight slowly filtered through the fast dispersing clouds. Farther away, across the valleys,

the mountains assumed a bluish tint as they dissolved into an azure mist.

As we advanced the physical features of the country varied considerably. The scenery was fantastically broken but withal presenting a wild, rugged grandeur and beauty. Some of the rocky heights were split asunder in gigantic castellated crags or frowning down in straight, smooth krantzes. Our road was very rough and broken, and in places the natural declivities were exceedingly steep, almost vertical—that our descent could only be accomplished by dismounting and individually leading our horses, zig-zagging our downward way amid a profusion of loose boulders and jutting spurs of jagged rocks. Fortunately, with discriminate care—although there were many false steps, accompanied by much slipping and sliding upon the part of both man and beast—our tasks were accomplished without mishap.

Ahead of us the steep and heavy undulations—the scenic effect to the landscape being replete with the picturesque—involuntarily evoked many expressions of wonderment and praise. Few had ever before seen such a panorama of gigantic, natural beauty, and the effect of such a display deeply stirred every fibre within us. Others felt enchanted as they gazed with astonishment and silent awe upon these mighty works of the Divine Creator. They were spell-bound, momentarily lacking the power of speech. Indeed, their very silence seemed to betoken their complete inability to give ade-

quate expression to their bewildering thoughts as they gazed upon the truly awful magnificence and stupendous grandeur of the scenery. All nature seemed to unite in a pæan of praise :

“ O Lord, how manifold are Thy works.”

Occasionally the landscape varied as fresh wonders in Nature were revealed to us. Grass-clad hills, green fields, with boschjes (small bushes), were strongly reminiscent of English and Scottish scenery. Occasional isolated farmsteads, cosily nestling amid a profusion of foliage and surrounded by green fields, which in turn were bounded by hedgerows and barbed wire fencing, whilst within these enclosures the cattle quietly browsed upon the pleasant pastureland—all these outwardly manifest signs of rural peacefulness and security harmonising with the generally homely aspect of the adjacent landscape. Farther on we passed near the 'Ngomo forest—one of the two chief forests in Zululand.

Seawards, the undulations gradually grow heavier and steeper, and the soil, consisting chiefly of potclay and turf, under the beneficent influence of the summer rains, becomes exceedingly fertile. In places the climate is almost tropical, but the frequent thunderstorms which prevail during the summer season tempers the great heat which otherwise would be almost unendurable.

Owing chiefly to the untiring efforts of the natives to exterminate them, wild animals are not altogether so

plentiful as the wild state of the country would naturally warrant. But in the lower, swampy districts, lions, tigers, leopards, crocodiles, hippopotami, antelopes of various kinds, including some koodoos, blesboks, blue wildebeeste and zebras are still to be found, and thither winter parties go to hunt these animals. In the 'Ngomo bush the great python still exists, but the buffalo and rhinoceros are not seen south of the forestland near the Umfolosi river.

After an enjoyable ride of three hours through scenery of natural magnificence, we reached a goodly sized farmstead almost completely hidden from view by a profusion of surrounding foliage. Entering the extensive grounds we rode beneath a vista of gum trees, the overlapping branches forming a natural roof, tempering pleasantly the atmosphere, which caused a delightfully cool, zephyr breeze to circulate through this sylvan glade, and wafting to our nostrils the seductive odours from the surrounding foliage. Our eyes glistened and our mouths fairly watered at the sight of some banana bushes with their clusters of luscious fruit, which grew in profusion tantalisingly near us, which we were not permitted to touch but which our aroused appetites deeply coveted.

One half-mile further a halt was made, and upon a convenient grassy slope both man and beast indulged in rest and refreshment. But "bully beef" and "hard tack" (biscuit) seemed very coarse fare compared with the delicious fruit we had previously seen. However,

the opportune arrival upon the scene of some Boer farmers with baskets of fruit—which they speedily sold—mitigated somewhat the cravings of our appetites.

Although our day's outing had been in the nature of a patrol, it had proved to us a pleasant picnic wherein we had, with comparative freedom, viewed some of the finest scenery in South Africa. The reaction from our wonderment and awe on first beholding the magnificence of the scenic display, produced a decidedly exhilarating effect as we all felt blithe and gay when jaunting campwards. We were highly elated at all we saw. It was such a complete and pleasant contrast to the monotonous, sombre, veld we had grown so accustomed to gaze upon. The keen, exhilarating air permeated our inmost beings, filling us with ecstasy—with an intoxication which fired our imaginations at each fresh portrayal of Nature's beauties. We laughed gaily, sang and chatted, absorbed by these exotic influences which tingled in our veins. For the nonce cares and anxieties were forgotten—relegated to the realms of oblivion. We were as new creatures, living and moving upon a higher plane, above the sordid pleasures and deceits of a base and unstable world. It was exquisite! Would that our lives embraced more of this real happiness, this delightful pleasure!

Our condition was indeed in marked contrast to our whimsical petulancy and vagaries of the previous night.

Unfortunately, an incident occurred to mar the happiness of one yeoman. Upon our return journey, and when near the camp, Bugler Bulow was thrown from his horse, sustaining a severe fracture of his left forearm. Colonel Roch, who happened at the moment to be near, skilfully administered the "first aid" treatment, which sufficed until he could be placed under the medical officer's care in camp.

Arrived here, another surprise awaited us. During our absence an urgent message had arrived for the colonel. Vague rumours began to leak out, which tingled our itching ears and set everyone on the *qui vive*. Late that night the adjutant announced that the battalion was under orders to trek on the following day for Mooi River, Natal, *viâ* Vryheid; hand over our remounts at the dépôt there, and to hold ourselves in readiness for embarkation to England between the 7th and the 17th of the following month (September).

That night the camp resounded with irrepressible outbursts of song and other spontaneous ebullitions of unrestrained joy.

CHAPTER VI.

QUARANTINE CAMPS.

Early on the following morning (August 28th) we commenced our return journey to Vryheid, "A" and "B" troops, 151st Squadron, forming the advance guard. At first the morning was overcast, but as the day advanced the clouds disappeared and the atmosphere became warmer, then towards noon very hot. Owing to the broken nature of the country, some difficulty was experienced with our transport over the rough and steep boulder-strewn roads. With these continual delays, our advance, during the first few miles, was necessarily much impeded.

Shortly before noon we reached our nearest supplementary base, where "B" Squadron had remained encamped since the 26th. From this point the roads improved, and travelling became easier, thus enabling our augmented forces to cover a considerable distance by the time—shortly before sunset—we reached and outspanned on our old camping ground at Umgoza. Altogether our squadron had trekked some thirty miles since the early morning. This being our next supplementary base, which had been established on August 25th, our column was further augmented by the details which had remained there, while we had pushed on to the 'Ngomo bush; also by an ambulance from Vryheid. The orderly in charge, with commercial foresight, had

brought a plentiful supply of bread, purchased on his own initiative, and for which he readily obtained one shilling and threepence a loaf.

. Our journey was resumed at an early hour on the following morning. As it was desired that we should reach Vryheid on this day, we pushed on with all expediency, occasionally cantering along short stretches of the road where the ground was less broken and travelling easier. But the sun was oppressively hot, and during these short canters we were smothered by the hot, choking, blinding dust which our mounts kicked up profusely from the loose soil.

A characteristic of our Major was his tender regard for the horses. Often during our treks—since we had left Newcastle—he would dismount and lead his animal for some distance. This was always the signal for the whole battalion to follow his example, and woe betide anyone who failed to comply immediately! Of course, we had no objection to the Major taking his bits of pedestrianism if he chose—he had only a few straps to carry on his person. But many of us rebelled inwardly, when, jaded by a long journey and the weight of our arms and accoutrements, we were compelled to indulge in these oft-recurring “little strolls,” especially if dealing with a refractory or jibbing animal at a spruit or broken piece of ground. Looking back upon those events, I must admit we were somewhat selfishly inconsiderate towards our poor beasts who had so patiently borne the burdens (ourselves) and heat of the day. No

doubt, the Major was right, and his humane sentiments fully justified his actions, but at the time our opinions differed considerably. Had we all been highly trained and well-disciplined soldiers, who had weathered many a campaign, we should probably have complied with a perfect *sang froid*, but being only Volunteers we no doubt considered ourselves somewhat privileged above the ordinary "Tommy," and grumbled accordingly.

Some of the subalterns shared our views. Upon one occasion while trekking on the Zululand border over an exceedingly rough and hilly piece of country, these continual feats of pedestrianism "riled" one officer in particular. When the Major, who was ahead of us, disappeared over the brow of the hill we were laboriously climbing, the subaltern immediately remounted, and his men were not slow to follow his example. Fortunately, before the crest of the hill was reached the Major on the other side had also remounted, and so the small mounted section were enabled to retain their seats.

But the Major could be severe when occasion demanded. During the mid-day halt—a few hours before we reached Vryheid—the officer observed one of the "markers" ill-treating his refractory horse. He was immediately brought before the irate officer, severely censured for his cruelty, ordered to hand his mount over to his troop, and to walk for the remainder of the day's journey afoot, also on the following day, and, if necessary, the whole distance to Mooi River.

Vryheid—eighteen miles from our morning camp—was reached on the afternoon of the same day. We encamped upon our old ground, joining the remaining details who had remained behind during our Zululand trek.

During our absence strange rumours had gained credence amongst the troops and inhabitants at Vryheid, due to the unsettled state of the natives in the district. The fact that it was twice reported and believed in Vryheid, that our column had been cut up and even massacred shows how the nervous system of the whites was affected by the situation. Thanks, probably, to the moral effect of our strong column, the natives showed no outward signs of resistance.

In recognition of our services the following complimentary letter was received by Colonel Roch.

VRYHEID.

29th August, 1902.

Dear Colonel Roch,

As you have to leave Vryheid to-morrow I think it but right that as magistrate of this district I should thank you for the assistance you and your column have upon all occasions given me. I am quite sure that what you have done has gone a long way towards keeping the peace between Boer and Native at a time when matters appeared critical. I am very sorry you are going and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ARTHUR J. SHEPSTONE.

Scarlet fever having broken out in "D" Squadron a few days previously, the whole battalion, by the medical officer's orders, was immediately upon our arrival at Vryheid, placed in quarantine. The town was placed "out of bounds," and every man strictly prohibited from visiting it. As we had been on trek for several weeks, the prospect of purchasing some canteen stores in Vryheid proved too great a temptation to some of the men, who, risking observation, surreptitiously slipped into the town under cover of darkness. Fortunately for themselves, their bravado proved successful, and their "breaking bounds" was not detected.

In the evening we received our July pay, which was a month overdue. The money was welcome to all, as by this time many of the fellows were reduced to a state commonly known in colloquial slang as "stony." Consequently, there was much jingling of coins and "squaring up" of debts contracted during this enforced period of penury.

During the war flagrant cases were recorded of the numerous difficulties experienced by some unfortunate yeomen, whose payments had been very irregular, of obtaining their long-deferred pay. In many cases these difficulties mainly arose from the men having been separated from their particular Company through illness or other causes, or because the Army pay-sheets were mislaid, lost, destroyed, or left in a chaotic condition through the illness or decease of the quartermaster. Sometimes months elapsed before a yeoman's claims

were satisfactorily settled. Distressing as these incidents undoubtedly were, in the majority of cases they could not easily have been avoided. One must bear in mind that with the vast body of troops operating over an area nearly as large as Central Europe, of regiments, battalions, and units being split up and sub-divided, the many casualties, sickness, and constant re-arranging of the personnel of the flying columns; the almost impossible task which these changes necessarily involved of always keeping an accurate record of each man and his pay-sheet. Thus, under the "state of war" many unavoidable mistakes, deficiencies, and irregularities in the accounts were bound to occur, despite the Army Pay Department's efforts to obviate and rectify these oft-recurring errors.

In extenuation of this apparently official incompetence, the Army Pay Department certainly made praiseworthy efforts to cope efficiently with these deficiencies and thoroughly master the many puzzling intricacies, and thus deal fairly with all the applicants' claims.

But with the third contingent of Imperial Yeomanry—of which our battalion formed a part—the Imperial authorities had devised a simple and expeditious method whereby any future payment difficulty arising, a recurrence of these errors would be obviated. While undergoing our training at Aldershot we were regularly paid each week. After embarkation, monthly, whenever possible. Each yeoman had the alternative of receiving the whole of his salary due when monthly payments

were settled, or he could, by a prior arrangement, have the whole or part remitted each month to his friends direct from the War Office, and receiving the balance himself. Furthermore, every yeoman was provided with a pay-book—in a waterproof envelope—containing twenty-five perforated receipt forms. Thus, whenever a payment was made, the amount due, date, payee, officer's and receiver's signatures, etc., were recorded thereon, the signed receipt being detached from the book and attached to the pay list. Under this sensible arrangement all individual payments were duly recorded, which tallied with the receipt-book counterfoil retained by each yeoman. Mistakes were fewer, deficiencies less frequent, and all unsettled claims were satisfactorily rectified. Throughout the whole period of my service with the Yeomanry, I do not recollect any instance occurring of non-payments remaining in abeyance or settlements being unnecessarily or indefinitely postponed.

Often times while on the trek, when we felt jaded and tired after a long journey, and sweltered under an exceptionally hot and powerful sun, we then found the weight of our arms and accoutrements excessively galling and burdensome, pressing upon our vitals, impeding the proper action of our respiratory organs, and giving us a decided stoop as our animals slouched along. Naturally, we were always glad when a brief halt enabled us to temporarily discard our appurtenances. The amount of ball ammunition carried by each

yeoman was fifty rounds in the shoulder bandolier, eighty rounds in the waistbelt bandolier, and ten rounds in the haversack, making a total of one hundred and fifty rounds per man. We were not altogether sorry when, prior to our departure for Newcastle from Vryheid, the quartermaster called in all the ammunition.

Our final evacuation of Vryheid took place upon the following morning (August 30th), "A" and "B" troops of the 151st Squadron acting as advance waggon guard. The column travelled in a westerly direction on the Vryheid-Utrecht road. At the foot of some kopjes, at a short distance from the town, we observed some parties of prospectors engaged in blasting operations.

Indications are not lacking which tend to show that in the near future the Vryheid district will be of inestimable value to South Africa and the British Empire as a mineral centre. Many gold reefs are reported to exist in the locality, some shafts have already been sunk, and gold discovered in payable quantities. During the latter part of the year 1895 representatives of large syndicates from Europe, Johannesburg, and other places went through the district, buying up and securing farms. It is said that the Jameson raid was largely responsible for the partial cessation of prospecting work. Soon after the war broke out two prospectors discovered some very rich quartz reefs at the Ingotje. Prospecting work has been carried out, and in some

cases successfully, on the following farms: Nondweni, Insuze, Inhlatsatje, Melmoth, Denny-Dalton, Wieman's Rust, M'Slonie (close to Warm Baths), Coetzees, 'Ngomo, Pongola, Van Rooyen's, Umtonganeni, and Ingotje (Vryheid Klondyk). In the opinion of experts the prospects of the gold and other mineral areas within the Vryheid district are very favourable. Hitherto, lack of capital and skilled labour has been the primary cause of their non-development. With this and judicious working, no doubt exists as to the future prosperity of Vryheid.

Silver, asbestos, and copper have also been found. A copper mine was already being worked by a Johannesburg syndicate when the war, unfortunately, stayed its further development. Coal of a good quality is also to be found in abundance, Hlobane being practically a coal mountain. Other hills are full of iron stone, including Lancaster Hill, which overlooks the town of Vryheid.

But the largest portion of Zululand—including the district of Vryheid—is adapted for agriculture and cattle breeding. The chief articles of commerce are grain, wool, hides, tobacco, timber, waggon-wood, and coal.

Colonial residents consider that Australia and Canadian immigrant farmers settling in the country would do well. Upon the completion of the Vryheid-Dundee railway this district, rich in pasture lands and mineral resources, will be opened to the rest of South

Africa, and in course of time prove a very valuable asset to the British Empire.

After trekking some seventeen miles along the hot, dusty road, we outspanned at Lieul Kiel. Near this locality, at a place called Blood River Poort, was the scene of the unfortunate disaster to Major Gough's Mounted Infantry on September 17th, 1901. This small British force, consisting of 500 mounted infantry and three guns, whilst proceeding towards Vryheid, was suddenly attacked by a Boer commando, 2,000 strong, under the command of General Louis Botha. After a short and gallant defence, the British were compelled to surrender to the enemy, who rushed them from all sides. The British casualties were heavy. Two of the guns were taken—but not before the plucky gunners had disabled them. Two hundred and forty prisoners were captured, including Major Gough and Captain Cracroft, only a few men escaping. The two captured officers, however, having effected their escape at nightfall, joined the British force at Dundee.

Nearly 150 of the prisoners were released later by the Boers, after having first been stripped of nearly all their clothing. It was bitterly cold and rainy weather, and the poor fellows, almost naked and exhausted, reached Vryheid next day in a pitiful condition. But the South Lancashire Regiment, who were then garrisoning Vryheid, showed them great hospitality. One of the wounded officers brought in (Major Dick) expired shortly after reaching the town.

Our next morning's reveillé (August 31st) was not until seven o'clock. This indulgence was a welcome boon. But, unfortunately, some fellows overdid it, and trouble ensued, particularly with one yeoman in our squadron. When reprimanded by the corporal for his indolence he deeply resented the non-com.'s interference, became a trifle abusive, resulting in his being brought before his officer and receiving several days' extra fatigues as punishment. It was an ample illustration of the old adage: "Give him an inch and he will take an ell." But at the time we feared his indiscretion might lose us any further indulgences.

Soon after reveillé I was somewhat surprised at being summoned to Captain Buckley's tent and interrogated as to whether I was present at Colonel Gough's disaster. Imagining that I knew the district well, our colonel was desirous for me to act as the column's guide, as Guide Dyer had terminated his services with our battalion upon reaching Vryheid. Evidently they had confused Colonel Gough's affair with my being one of the ambulance parties at the Tweefontein disaster in the Orange River Colony. However, the colonel's groom, who was acquainted with the district, proved an excellent substitute.

Although this part of the country through which we were passing was new ground to us, presenting similar characteristics to the South African veld—bare, arid, monotonous plains and undulating landscape, with sombre kopjes of diverse shapes and sizes indiscrimi-

nately dotted about—nevertheless, there were some pleasant spots.

About noon we passed through an avenue of tall gum and eucalyptus trees, their overhanging branches forming a natural roof, an effective screen against the glare and heat of the sun, whilst the exquisite breezes wafted through this vista were deliciously cool and fragrant.

As we emerged from this sylvan glade, our pleasant anticipations and contemplations received a sudden and rude shock as Nature's beauty and man's poverty were brought into sharp contrast and proximity. Upon our right, abutting on to the road was a partially-demolished, desolate-looking Boer farm, dirty, neglected, and with rank weeds growing in the forecourt, the whole scene presenting a very melancholy aspect. Attempts at restoration had already been made, which may have imparted some degree of comfort, and made the place more habitable. The entire Boer family, of various ages and sizes—and upon whose visages a liberal application of soap and water appeared desirable—crowded at the doorless and windowless openings at the front of the building, some gazing at us with vacuous expressions, others in bewildered curiosity. Upon a closer scrutiny still others revealed undeniable traces of sullen scorn and inveterate hatred. Truly, it was an inexpressibly sad scene. Indeed, one felt some commiseration for this poor, benighted family (especially for the youngsters), who had returned to find their home ruined and desolate, perhaps after years of patient toil with it,

and had now to start over again. This was a typical instance of the aftermath—a legacy of cruel War.

After all, the Boers have themselves to blame, as their suicidal policy precipitated their country in a conflict, and into which we were unwillingly forced. Those who call the tune must perforce pay the piper, as the Boers have found to their cost.

Now that the war is over it may perhaps seem a trifle inhuman to indulge in such apparently high-faluting sentiments; uncharitable; too much like hitting a man when he is down. But in extenuation of such sentiments, and remembering the great sacrifices made by our Colonies in South Africa, and others who shared in the late conflict—animated solely by a fervent, patriotic desire to uphold the honour, prestige, and glorious traditions of our race and world-wide Empire—one cannot refrain from indulging somewhat in deprecatory comments upon the follies of a nation which have been productive of so much rancour, hate, and bitterness, especially when so typical an instance was brought thus prominently to our notice.

It was not entirely in a spirit of animus, bias, or bitter sarcasm that we then realized the severe and just retribution overtaking a nation's misdeeds, but rather with a tolerant pity for the poor, misguided Boer patriots who had blindly followed the dictates and sophistries of their ambitious and avaricious Governments. Thus the poor, deluded burgher, deceived by

the foibles and highly-inflammatory perorations propounded by certain of their bellicose leaders upon his credulity, permitted himself to engage in such a deadly, homicidal conflict that brought to many a home utter ruin, poverty, and wretchedness, the effects of which several generations will fail thoroughly to eradicate. Yes, these are War's real sufferers, while the true authors of the conflict are *fêted* and idolized by civilized nations.

Now that five years have passed since the long-drawn-out conflict, and, whilst desiring a generous friendship with our late foes, and a brighter future for the peace and prosperity of South Africa, we must not allow our good motives to err on the side of excessive leniency towards them, and so warp our saner judgment to the premier claims of our own kith and kin. To a degree deference to Boer sentiment is certainly a harbinger of our well-intentioned fellowship, but British and Colonial feelings must also be considered. Our Colonial brethren have so willingly and patriotically assisted in upholding the traditions of our Empire, deeming no personal sacrifice too great for the maintenance of our high Imperial Ideals. These Loyalists who nobly helped the Mother Country in her hours of darkest peril and greatest need, deservedly claim our primary considerations in the future settlement of the country.

Effective safeguards are essentially of vital importance as a preventative against the recurrence of Boer

intolerance and tyranny. British paramountcy *must be maintained*, despite mere sentiment and opposition. Freely, willingly, much blood has been shed and treasure expended to uphold our supremacy, and it behoves every responsible statesman and consistent patriot to whom the Empire's welfare is a National, a personal one, to insist that our recent great sacrifices shall not be made nugatory. State ministers, holding high positions under the Crown, by virtue of their exalted office must not betray the country's confidence reposed in them by deliberating upon these matters of national import and gravity in a vacuous, convivial, or conciliatory spirit. Pro-Boer or Little Englander sentiment or influence should not entice them from their clear path of duty. No more vacillation; no recrudescence of the policy of "blowing hot, blowing cold"; no further truckling to the effeminately mawkish sentiments of irresponsible and misguided politicians. Upon British statesmanship devolves a heavy responsibility, the beneficent or baneful effects of whose policy will be felt for generations to come.

To initiate this recent reckless, illusory experiment (to shirk the onus of responsibility for fulfilling calumnious election pledges) is a dangerous precedent, a menace to the Empire, and a probable recrudescence of those grave issues which would undoubtedly react upon the whole of South Africa. Responsible Government for our two newly-acquired Colonies should have been withheld for at least twenty years, thereby allow-

ing a sufficient time for the building-up and strengthening of unquestionably a loyal British community, surpassing, in numerical strength, the Het Volk party. Never again should a Dutch Government have been permitted to rule the British in a British Colony. Racial bitterness is not yet a "dead horse." Neither will the premature granting of self-government hasten it. Time alone will heal the War wounds.

Unstable, irresponsible, trickster politicians seeking to nullify the beneficent advantages derived from the late conflict should be ostracised by the long-suffering electorate from further participation in our National assemblies. Irreparable harm will surely accrue from their continued mischievous policy, and their retention in the public service should be no longer tolerated.

Great Britain desires no traitors among her administrators who mould and wield the destinies of her Empire. She desires a united Imperial Government, oblivious when necessary to mere party considerations and tactics, but strong in its inflexible determination to strengthen the existing bonds between the Mother Country and our Dominions beyond the seas—not a mere gullible party of office-seekers, incompetent and impotent, who by ambiguity, maladministration, cheeseparing, and Empire wrecking seek the plaudits of their own particular bigoted sects, and by their proverbial ineptitude neglect the sacred National Duty entrusted to them.

Let us confidently hope that ere long a wise, judiciously firm, yet withal humane British policy will again be prosecuted with vigour. Christianity, Imperialism, friendship, justice, tolerance, reform, and progress. These must be the fundamental principles for guiding aright the destinies of our South African Colonies. Wisely-controlled, may the simple-minded burgher, despite his foibles, eventually clasp honestly the right hand of fellowship; forget his inherent animus and ancient enmities, and honourably use his newly-conferred privileges as a British subject. Then, as loyal subjects of King Edward VII., will Briton and Boer, in the genesis of a new era dawning in South Africa, work together harmoniously for their future happiness, peace, and prosperity. By these means only can we confidently hope to build up a loyal, self-governing British Colony—a new and vigorous Dominion of South Africa.

Soon after midday (on this our second day's journey from Vryheid) we outspanned and camped at a convenient spot five miles from Utrecht.

At this period our mounts were giving much cause for anxiety. Under normal conditions the health of the majority of our horses had been fairly well maintained. But during our return journey from Zululand several had fallen sick. The prevailing diseases were mange and glanders, also a form of poisoning resulting from an indulgence in an obnoxious veld-weed obtained whilst grazing. On the morning of September 1st we

found that four horses had succumbed during the night to this latter complaint. Just before we left camp two more, which were in a serious condition, had to be shot, although efforts were made fruitlessly to save one of them. The veterinary-sergeant was much perplexed, and seemed quite unable to cope adequately with the prevailing horse-sickness.

A sight common to the South African veld is the number of defunct animals in various stages of putrefaction, and emitting a vile, nauseous effluvia; a skull, a pair of horns, or a pile of cleanly picked bones. Frequently during the war overworked animals, while trekking with the columns, would sink exhausted, and if unable to respond to the lashings and urgings freely showered upon them by their black masters, were promptly unharnessed and left upon the road or drawn aside to die.

It was always a pitiful sight. These poor, abandoned creatures, as though fully cognisant of the fate awaiting them, would gaze with dumb, piteous eyes at passers-by, as though appealing for their sympathy and aid. Before life was quite extinct they were doomed to suffer further tortures. By some strange instinct the great hideous-looking, disgusting asvovels, or vultures—aptly designated the “veld scavengers”—knowing that the poor beasts were doomed creatures, would gradually appear from all points of the compass, wheel around high overhead in ever-decreasing circles, and uttering hoarse, discordant cries, awaiting the

auspicious moment when life was extinct to swoop down and gluttonously satiate themselves to repletion with their prey.*

What realism was here portrayed in the words of our Divine Teacher : "For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles (or vultures) be gathered together."

On this our third day's trek from Vryheid, after passing through some five miles of hilly country, we suddenly emerged on to the open veld close to Utrecht. Being under quarantine regulations, we did not enter the town, but passed along its outskirts. It was a typical Boer town, scattered bungalow residences and a Dutch Church built of stone standing in a prominent central position in the market square, surrounded by long, low stores. The military garrison lay in scattered camps and on outlying blockhouses built on the kopjes in the vicinity.

We crossed the spruit, and continued in a westerly direction along the Newcastle road towards Zands Spruit. Many old familiar spots were recognised, especially our old and now deserted blockhouse at Umbana, which lay on its isolated kopje, like some haunted building, desolate and abandoned. Our camp was pitched upon the opposite side of the Buffalo River, in full view of our old fortress.

*Later, at Waterfall, near Newcastle, a vulture died in mid-air and with outstretched wings fell with a peculiar hissing sound into our camp. The probable explanation of the cause of the creature's strange death was due to the fact of its having previously partaken gluttonously of some poisoned animal, and the sun's heat, acting upon the poison within the bird, had killed it.

The ten-mile journey between Utrecht and our camp had not been entirely devoid of discomfort. Our road was good, but the whole time a strong, westerly wind blew into our faces with great force minute particles of blinding, stinging grit. With eyes smarting from the sun's constant glare and the continuous bombardment of dust, with lips parched and dry, and a burning sensation in our throats, we were glad of the opportunity to stretch our aching limbs and await the arrival of the convoy. But respite for the weary was destined to be shortlived.

Just as the foremost waggon were entering the camp, while resting near the officers' quarters, I noticed the servants kindling a fire close to the long, inflammable grass. Anticipating trouble, I urged them to be careful, but scarcely had I done so when, as expected, the veld grass caught alight, and, fanned by the strong breeze, the hot devouring flames quickly spread over a wide area. Major Chitty immediately turned out nearly the whole battalion, who, with nosebags, tunics, bits of sacking, and any other handy article (the blankets were then on the unpacked waggon) attempted to grapple with the flames. With marvellous rapidity the roaring flames licked up the long grass, and the conflagration spread in all directions, but, fortunately, away from the camp, the great tongues of fire and the fierce heat driving back parties endeavouring to extinguish them. One could only beat the flames vigorously for a few moments and then, with a hot scorched face, retire

for a few moments from the fiery furnace. The fire spread towards a mealie patch close to some Kaffir kraals. Chattering shrilly, intermingled with cries of fear, the Kaffir women and children, rapidly emerging from the huts, ran to and fro with gourds of water, endeavouring to extinguish the flames. These praiseworthy, but futile, methods seemed equivalent to an endeavour to put out a huge bonfire with thinblefuls of water. After their excited but ineffectual attempts to quell the conflagration, some Kaffir men then came and helped. One elderly Kaffir, probably now realizing his importance and the need of his presence in this time of emergency, came gravely and slowly forth. In a very deliberate manner he soaked a piece of cloth in a bucket of water, continually spreading out the damp fabric on the flaming grass. Certainly, by this unique method he was able to extinguish small patches of flaming grass, but it was as a drop in the ocean. We all felt some sympathy for the distressed Kaffirs, and laboured hard to stem the sheet of flame or otherwise divert its course, and thus save the jeopardized kraal, towards which it had previously approached.

After over an hour's hard contest—wherein first one side and then the other were getting the upper hand—the conflagration was effectually extinguished, and the kraal saved. As a result, several acres of veld were a smoking, blackened mass, whilst the air was filled with a stifling odour of charred grass. To our no small

amusement the Kaffirs loudly upbraided the "dirty Dutchmen," whom they supposed had—out of spite, I presume—deliberately set the veld alight.

Hot, tired, and thirsty, with scorched and blackened faces, we presented a very whimsical appearance as, with jaded steps, we slowly plodded back to camp. As an official recognition of our promptness, all who had taken a part in extinguishing the flames were noted, and promised exemption from all "fatigues" for the next few days.

At midnight the Major observed a light still burning in one of the tents ("lights out" always sounded at 9.45 p.m.), and proceeded to investigate. Hearing him outside, the majority of the inmates slipped out at the rear under the valance of the tent. When the officer gained admittance he found only the sergeant present. After an official enquiry the following morning, the whole tent got a week's fatigues for their display of smartness.

We remained in camp the next day. At nine o'clock the whole battalion was paraded at the hospital and examined medically, to ascertain whether any fresh cases of scarlet fever existed.

The official promises of the previous day of temporary exemption from fatigues for the "fire extinguishers" were speedily broken. At reveillé I was on duty at the quartermaster's stores, and after the medical inspection was warned with others for camp police duty. When remonstrated with, the orderly sergeant, while regret-

ting the breaking of the promise, pleaded that in consequence of the official indulgence so few men were available for fatigues that he was perforce compelled to draw upon some of the exempted ones. Against this decision there seemed no appeal without displaying insubordination; besides, as the police duty required was so easy a task, it appeared too trivial a matter for complaint. Still, we felt the sergeant's attitude was unjustifiable.

Two other troopers and myself, with a non-com., were accordingly detailed to patrol the camp and drive away the nigger boys, who, from the neighbouring kraals, came and hung about the waggon. This order was due to our quarantine regulations. The shrieking, black imps dodged us from waggon to waggon, and cover to cover. One of the policemen vigorously cracked his *sjambok*, and the youngsters finally retired. Nominally we were on duty all day, but after the departure of our black friends, as there were no more to drive away, we ensconced ourselves in the long grass, and beguiled the remaining hours resting after our physical exertions, or reading.

On the following morning the battalion was again paraded and addressed by Colonel Roch, who informed us that we had trekked some *560 miles since leaving Newcastle in the previous July; our conduct throughout

* From later statistics I understand the distance was nearer 1,000 miles.

had been exemplary, no serious crime having been committed. Through no fault of our own we had sickness among the horses and men, and, unfortunately, were in quarantine. He then propounded the alternative conditions respecting the remaining portion of our military service offered by the War Office. We had the option of : (1) being discharged in South Africa ; (2) being discharged on our arrival in England ; (3) finishing the remainder of our term of twelve months in England. With reference to the previous order authorising our embarkation for England between September 7th and 17th, a later message had been received cancelling it, and substituting a fresh one, to wit : (1) to be discharged in South Africa ; (2) to return to England at once ; (3) to finish the remaining period of our service in South Africa. Only the yeomen accepting the latter condition would receive the five pounds war gratuity. He, therefore, strongly advised us to remain with the battalion and finish our time in South Africa, as probably a fresh order would be received soon from the War Office offering better terms.

Such terms naturally made us feel that the military authorities, now that we had successfully fulfilled our mission in Zululand, considered the Yeomanry a useless encumbrance, and desired to discharge them before the expiration of their period of service (*i.e.*, one year from the date of their enlistment). This would have deprived such as accepted of their gratuities, as well as their pay

for the remainder of their terms, and, naturally, most of the men declined.

We had also another cause for complaint. Although during the war the Army on "active service" was supposed to be placed upon a higher scale of daily rations than in times of peace, in many parts of the country the troops suffered great privations through shortened rations.

Hitherto our battalion had had but little cause for complaint regarding their victualling, and upon the whole the full daily issue of rations was regularly maintained. On the advice of the Principal Medical Officer, it was decided, as necessary for the health of the troops, to continue the "war rations" beyond the term at which active service conditions ceased to exist, *i.e.*, three months from the declaration of Peace. The "Supply" authorities, however, interpreted this as applying only to the permanent garrison, the health of the auxiliaries apparently being a matter of no moment to them after the war was over. Consequently at the beginning of September we were placed upon the reduced daily scale of rations, *viz.*, one pound of fresh meat or three-quarters of a pound of tinned, one pound of fresh bread, one-third of an ounce of coffee, one-sixth of an ounce of tea, and three ounces of sugar per man. Such extras as jam, cheese, and bacon were then excluded from our dietary, and vegetables were practically unobtainable at any price. Several indignant groups discussed the situation with much animation, and one

yeoman wrote a letter of complaint to a Welsh paper. It was some weeks before we reverted to the old scale of rations.

It was said that this result was due to the vigorous action of General Featherstonhaugh, who was greatly annoyed at the "red-tapeism" of the "Supply" officers, and ordered the reversion to "active service" scale, refusing to let the matter be referred home.

On the morning of September 4th we struck camp and rode towards Newcastle, reaching that town some three hours later. By this time our appearances had become decidedly unsoldierlike—very dirty, ragged, and travel-stained, but all looking fit and happy. Man and beast were freely loaded with rolled cloak, forage, nosebag, blackened, dented canteen, water-bottle, haversack, slung rifle, and equipment. In addition, many of us carried a varied assortment of dirty tins, pannikins, billy-cans, and other paraphernalia dangling from the saddles by straps or string. When cantering a fearful racket was created, whilst the constant chafing of the numerous strings would cause a loosened can suddenly to clatter to the ground. The owner thereof was compelled to drop out of the ranks and wait until the whole squadron had ridden over and probably kicked the article out of shape before effecting its recovery. We were indeed a disreputable, motley crew in comparison with the smart, well-groomed, polished-buttoned troops garrisoning Newcastle.

Occasionally, when near a town or store, we had purchased tins of jam or condensed milk. By puncturing two holes at the top of the milk-tin its contents were economically used, paper or rag plugs being inserted in the apertures after use. These, of course, we carried in our haversacks, together with towel, soap, razor, broken biscuit, stationery, and other small articles. After a brisk canter the plugs were not always effective, and sometimes when rummaging in the haversack one would find a conglomeration of sticky milk, biscuit, towel, and other things, and be apt to vent his annoyance by indulging in scarcely parliamentary language!

On account of the quarantine regulations, prior to entering the town strict orders were issued prohibiting the men from leaving the column to make individual purchases at the stores, and these commands were rigorously enforced, despite the ineffectual attempts upon the part of some to disobey. On the opposite side of the town we recognised and conversed with several of our chums in the 36th Battalion of Yeomanry, who were out manœuvring, and whom we had not seen since our departure from Aldershot.

At noon we halted at Oakhill Farm—six miles to the west of Newcastle—and two miles further on camped at Waterfall. On the way we had observed a row of dead horses in various stages of putrefaction. Witticisms were freely indulged in respecting these carcasses: "The last muster," "They had *formed troop* before expiring," and so forth. At that auspicious moment several

"led" sick horses in "C" Squadron came in for further jovial chaff and sarcasms as the mournful-looking procession passed along.

For a month exactly we remained encamped at Waterfall. The camp was situated upon a typical piece of veld, the topographical nature of the surrounding landscape being undulating. Several miles away to the west we could see the Drakensbergs, the frontier line between Natal and the Orange River Colony. Harrismith was four days' trek along the continuation road by which we had travelled from Newcastle.

Although "in quarantine" and forbidden to visit Newcastle (excepting, by special permission, the quartermaster's assistant and some officers) the time passed pleasantly. Each day's routine was somewhat as follows, viz., reveillé at seven o'clock, stables, ablutions, breakfast, rifle inspection, watering horses, tent cleansing and ventilation, and spreading our blankets in the sun, horses grazing, stables at noon (usually), dinner, watering horses, and stables at four o'clock, followed by tea; feeding and rugging our animals, posting the main guards and stable picquets at six o'clock, "first post" at nine o'clock, "last post" half-an-hour later, "lights out" at a quarter to ten. From our first arriving at Newcastle in the previous June the daily bugle calls had been in force. The most familiar calls were the "Orderly sergeants" and "Come to the cookhouse door, boys," the latter summons being obeyed with special alacrity. In addition to the above

daily duties, there were also innumerable camp and quartermaster fatigues (the latter was preferred by most to the ordinary camp fatigues, as the men assisting often received some extra delicacy for their help from the quartermaster), and grazing guards. The latter was not hard work—a non-com. with two or three mounted men accompanying the horses to their grazing grounds, and occasionally “rounding up” any animals straying. Also there were frequent horse back exercises and tactical manœuvres. At one of these latter we were distinguished from the “foe” by being in our shirtsleeves, and quickly obtained the soubriquet of “Buffalo Bill’s bounders.”

Generally the night stable picquets experienced some difficulty with the horses. The beasts received their last feed of hay about six o’clock, which kept them fairly quiet for an hour or two. Then they began to show signs of impatience, growing very fidgety. Although they were apparently always securely tethered beforehand, many of them contrived to get loose, wandering promiscuously over the camp, but usually soon making tracks towards the stacked forage and grabbing extra mouthfuls. Then the picquets’ real work began. It was a contest of human intelligence and skill pitted against the artfulness and vagaries of the animals. Numerous artifices and expedients were resorted to by the picquets, but the horses, by some instinct or unaccountable intuition, seemed to divine each subterfuge, and with aggravating persistency

evaded or thwarted each well-conceived plan. Sometimes there would be regular pursuits around the tents, the animals, in passing the coveted forage heaps, often momentarily slackening their speed and defiantly snatching mouthfuls therefrom. An exasperated yeoman once chased the offending quadrupeds, cracking a whip. There was a fearful stampede through the lines, the horses in their mad career tripping and stumbling over the tent-ropes, amid the execrations of the rudely-aroused inmates within.

I quickly found that the best method for capturing a defaulting animal was to quietly stalk the beast until level with the end of its long, trailing rope. Then, cautiously stooping down, grasp and give it a couple of twists around the hand, and hanging on tightly. Directly the animal felt the rope taut it generally struggled violently for a few moments and then passively submitted itself to be led back and again tethered. Once while chasing a fiery-tempered steed I caught hold of the tail end of its rug. The infuriated brute struggled violently, but in spite of its kicks I tenaciously hung on. Suddenly there was a rasping noise; I staggered backwards, and found myself retaining half of the rug, whilst the released animal galloped off with the remainder. Another time I tried a fresh dodge, and for nearly half-an-hour followed at an even pace in the circular wake of a truant. Wearied at last, apparently, by this nocturnal pedestrianism and abstinence from grazing, the animal gave in and was soon secured.



GORGE NEAR WATERFALL CAMP.



MORNING ABLUTIONS.

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There was always some reckoning up of the number of loose horses at the changing of the night picquets, while at reveillé there would be a concentrated "rounding up" of the wanderers.

These stable picquets were not entirely devoid of humour. On one particularly cold, gusty night it happened to be my turn for stable picquet (10.20 p.m. to 2.40 a.m.), and a sudden impulse possessed me to make the shivering visiting officer do a bit of extra work. Generally, the picquets evaded the usual query relating to horses being loose, and the visiting officer, doubtless only too anxious to return to his lately-evacuated warm blankets with as little delay as possible, did not always seem anxious to press the point. Upon this particular occasion I did not follow the common precedent, but candidly informed him of the exact number that were "a-roaming." Obviously, as it was his duty to personally ascertain that they were all secured before retiring, he had no alternative but to come to my assistance. As he wouldn't run with me after the animals we had a rather prolonged walk together up and down the lines chasing them, until another yeoman assisted us. Undoubtedly, the officer must have inwardly blessed me for this extra piece of nightly pedestrianism, but at the same time evidently realised I had only been strictly discharging my duty.

At a short distance behind our camp, and continuing on the north-west side of it, the veld rose abruptly, and formed a long, horn-shaped ridge, being the extreme

edge of some higher tableland. We were thus hemmed in on two sides by a long, semi-circular wall. Across this higher ground traversed the upper reaches of a long, winding river. At a point where the stream almost reached the edge of the upper ground, overlooking our camp, its course deviated to a kloof which wound by a long, circuitous route on to the lower veld close by. The cleft or fissure was probably due to the constant erosion of water which had in course of time worn away the subsoil, and thus formed a natural channel for the stream. This conjecture seemed proven by the great masses of rock and huge boulders which were piled or scattered in indescribable profusion and chaos, revealing to us another example of Nature's mighty forces. At the head of this gorge the river tumbled over the summit of the rocky wall and down its sloping sides in a series of bubbling, sparkling cascades, which sang like a naiad, mingling in a foaming mass with the waters of the extensive pool at the base, and sending forth continuous, ever-widening circles rippling across its agitated surface until they lapped the opposite shores.

Overflowing this natural, rocky basin the stream flowed among the huge and partially-embedded boulders, forming innumerable small pools of clear shining water, until it emerged at the end of the gorge and continued its way as a turbid, placid river into the open country beyond. The sides of the kloof were fully a hundred feet in height, and in some places even

higher, rising abruptly from the river bed, and frowning down with straight, smooth, rocky faces or in series of piled-up, commingling boulders and subsoil. Evidences were abundantly apparent of the disintegrating influences by time and weather, of the sharp, jagged edges and other rocky protuberances, the castellated crags which overhung these rocky walls, as though the slightest movement would seriously disturb their poise and send them crashing into the ravine; the huge boulders, apparently previously undermined by subsoil subsidence, wrenched from their positions and flung into the gorge. In places the kloof was quite 200 feet in width, whilst in other parts it narrowed considerably. Amid this region of upheaval, chaos, and stream, the foliage grew in profusion, all kinds of trees and scrub finding lodgment on the rocky sides, to which they tenaciously clung.

It was such a delightful contrast, during the hot afternoons, when our eyes were aching from the distressingly strong glare of the powerful sun, which reflected its penetrating rays over the apparently illimitable veld, to retire to this sylvan glade, and, seated there, to watch the birds flitting from branch to branch; to gaze upon the bright, warm colour of the red iron-stone faces of the rocks, where the sun's rays caught the higher crags and its reflected light tinged the surrounding foliage with many fiery, variegated tints; to inhale the soft, cooling breezes, or to bathe in the limpid waters of one of the innumerable small streams. Owing

to its great depth and strong undercurrent, bathing in the large pool at the foot of the waterfall was only indulged in by expert swimmers. Many a pleasant hour was spent in this fairy glen.

Our other recreations were cricket and football, the latter played in the cool of the evenings. A boxing ring was also erected, gloves were produced, and many indulged in the noble art of self-defence. My first bout was with a tough Welshman several years my senior. I fear the "essentially scientific" mode of attack and defence was sadly lacking in our performance. Our grotesque attitudes and wild lunging immensely amused an highly-appreciative audience, who promptly designated us "two terrible bruisers." We knocked each other about so much that they were compelled to separate us during the second round, but not before my opponent had made my nose bleed and I had "half-winded" him. He declined my offer to finish the contest the next evening.

This boxing ring also had its advantages as a tribunal in the settlement of disputes. On one occasion, during stables, two yeomen both claimed a particular grooming brush. As neither would give way, the matter was referred to the sergeant-major. After listening to their respective claims, he decided they should "box" for it that evening. The contest aroused great enthusiasm, and was short and sharp. After four vigorous rounds the victor was applauded by

his supporters upon having gained, not the "cake," but the "brush."

During my leisure moments I was able to indulge in my favourite hobby of photography, the colonel kindly allowing me the use of his covered waggon as an improvised developing room. Captain Buckley and other officer "snapshotists" showed a keen interest in my work, and frequently besought my aid with theirs. Indeed, I was inundated with orders from the whole battalion—fabulous prices being offered—but my stock being extremely limited, and much difficulty experienced in obtaining an adequate supply of the necessary materials from Newcastle, I was unfortunately unable to make my exceedingly restricted output coincide with the ever-increasing demands for photographs.

After the prompt official measures which had been wisely adopted on board the ss. *Assaye* during our voyage out, any further attempts at gambling on a large scale had not been tried. Of course, here and there, in some individual cases at cards, the betting instinct occasionally manifested itself, but as they were generally conducted in a quiet and almost inoffensive manner, these indulgences were allowed practically to pass unnoticed. Unfortunately, however, during the periods of leisure at Waterfall Camp some few yeomen, probably considering matters rather slow, manufactured some "roulette" boards, and clandestinely seizing their opportunity, during the evenings when the coast was clear of officers, invited men to their tents to "try

their luck." These revolving discs, being hand-made, the owners thereof had so arranged the partitions that nearly all the advantage in this "game of chance" was invariably gained by the board holders and little or none by their gullible victims. So fascinated did many become by this pernicious form of so-called sport, and such big stakes were laid and lost, that the board-holders, profiting by the credulity of their too-indulgent victims, quickly reaped a rich harvest. The infection grew apace. Men from all parts of the camp, many at first out of mere curiosity, were drawn towards these plague spots; would hover on the outskirts of this whirlpool of vice, become interested spectators, hesitate, then, unable longer to resist the subtle, overwhelming gambling influence, play a small stake. Infatuated by the game, they would risk higher stakes, and finally, casting discretion aside, were drawn into this vortex and commenced "plunging."

Once or twice I glanced into these tents. Gathered around these discs were groups of surging players, their features animated by suppressed excitement as they laid their stakes and intently watched the revolutions. The flickering light of two or three candles revealed among the crowd the hard-set, tense, almost agonised countenance of some heavy loser, who, probably aroused by inward, tumultuous passions which were stifling his discretion, plunged wildly in the hope of retrieving his losses. It seemed—perhaps to my distorted imagination—as though the incipient madness had taken entire

possession of them, was in their blood; as though the greed of avarice shone through their glittering eyes, their losses only stimulating them to further, heavier, deeper plunging; the gambling mania-demon firmly held them in his awful grip; the mocking fiends of hell had the mastery over their actions, and made them willing, obedient slaves. I felt the insidious, subtle, attractive influence all around me, it seemed to permeate the very air one breathed, as though some overmastering, unseen power was forcibly impelling me to join the others. It was an unspeakable relief when I suddenly roused from my stupor, and, by Divine strength, was enabled to resist the awful, deadly temptation.

Amid ribald jest and mocking laughter from their fellow players, men with hard, tense faces would stagger from the gambling tent "stony broke," and vowing they would not lay another cent on the "cursed" thing. But these good resolutions were too often evanescent, spoken in moments of uncontrollable anger and disgust. The gambling fiend held them too strongly in his thralldom. They would sell portions of their kits, and with the proceeds "plunge" again in the hope of retrieving their "bad luck," but too often with disastrous results to themselves. Elusive Dame Fortune refused to be courted. The game was an all-absorbing passion. It was discussed, criticised, and by some condemned. Still the victims played on and lost, and plunged yet again; and still the clink of the coin continued with ceaseless regularity as the board-

holders scraped in their hoards of silver and gold. Capricious were the discs, claiming their heavy tolls, the price of a fool's peace of mind for his folly. One yeoman lost as much as £14. It seemed as if their money took unto itself wings and flew away. I attempted to reason with some who had been severely bitten, upon the folly of gambling, but fear my well-meant remarks made but small impression.

Eventually, upon the matter becoming known, our colonel immediately stopped the gambling, and four of the delinquents who held boards were put into the guard tent. The defaulters, under escort, were placed in front of the paraded battalion, and Colonel Roch, in addressing the troops, greatly deprecated the prisoners' gambling conduct, which he described with some warmth as fraudulent and unfair, the chances of success to outsiders—according to the boards which had been officially examined—being almost nil, and adding, that the delinquents deserved a ducking in a horse-pond. Later they were brought before him, and two of them summarily dealt with. This incident certainly was an unpleasant reflection upon our battalion's hitherto good reputation, but we quite realised the gravity of the offence, and the punishment meted out as just for the sharpers who had so unfairly taken advantage of the confidence of the unsuspecting victims to practise upon them this system of wholesale cheating, thus checking, at the beginning, a pernicious evil which had

begun so strongly to manifest its baneful influence upon our hitherto intelligent, self-respecting yeomen.

One amusing incident, which might have had more serious consequences, is worthy of record. Studded thickly over the veld are thousands of anthills, varying in height from a few inches to a couple of feet. During the war they were constantly used as an effective cover for troops while deploying and advancing against the enemy in the open. Also, they were utilised in camp as improvised cooking stoves. A cavity would be scooped from the top or side and the fuel and pot inserted. These anthills were of rock-like hardness, necessitating much spadework when required for cooking purposes. On this particular occasion the transport conductor's nigger-servant was returning from watering some horses when the animals bolted. He was thrown from his mount head foremost on to an anthill. After a few moments he picked himself up. Beyond a severe shaking and a few bruises he was uninjured—but his thick skull had detached some portions of the anthill! This is no fairy-tale.

During the campaign the troops sometimes were offered an opportunity of varying their meagre diet with rabbit. "Bunny's" stroll into camp was heralded by the great commotion which his presence caused. Troops, niggers and dogs chased the inoffensive creature with loud "hullabalos," and as the distracted animal paced through the camp men would rush from their tents and join in the chase. Generally

a handy missile ended its career, and a scramble ensued for the possession of the contested animal, the successful one taking it as an unexpected delicacy to share with his comrades.

Once a rabbit visited our camp at Waterfall, but quickly dodged out again and escaped into its burrow. Charley David, our ubiquitous friend, was soon on its track. Certainly on this occasion his professional services stood him in good stead. He set to work with a spade and soon dug out the creature.

Our camp was not free from reptile visitants. At reveillé a yeoman once discovered a small snake snugly reposing beneath his blankets. On two other occasions long, poisonous creatures, several feet in length, were captured. One of them almost escaped down its hole, but a fellow successfully "noosed" its tail with a strong cord. Several hung on to the line, whilst others crowded round in a welter of curiosity, as picks and shovels were quickly got to work. Eventually the reptile was unearthed, and as it was dragged forth it made a vicious lunge at the spectators, but a sharp stroke from a spade immediately severed its head from its body.

Although in quarantine, we were not entirely free from official visitors. Among these latter were General Featherstonhaugh—in command of the troops in the Newcastle district—and the Principal Medical Officer. The remainder of "B" Squadron, the hospital and medical officer also joined us from Königsberg Fort.

Our Squadron Sergeant-Major (T. Trudgeon), who had been seriously ill in Newcastle military hospital for several weeks, returned to duty with our battalion, being accorded a hearty welcome by us all.

One sad incident was the sale of the late Corporal Low's kit (he was drowned at Waterval in the previous August). On active service or abroad, at a soldier's decease, his kit is generally sold by auction in his regiment, and the proceeds realised from the sale are forwarded to his relatives. Fancy prices are frequently given by the purchasers as a mark of respect to their late comrade.

According to medical regulations our period of quarantine should have ceased at the end of twenty-one days, thus in the *interim* giving any further suspected cases of scarlet fever time to develop. Unfortunately, some fresh cases were discovered and sent to Newcastle Hospital, thus prolonging our period of isolation for several weeks. A disinfecter was brought to the camp, and all our clothing, blankets and tents sterilized.

Hitherto we had been billeted at about a dozen or fourteen men to each tent. Additional ones were issued, allowing relatively one tent to every five or six men. As the rainy season was approaching, prior to the hot summer weather, these extra tents provided us with more comfort and elbow room.

Several yeomen of our battalion who were taking their discharges in South Africa, were sent to Fort

“A,” near Newcastle, and there isolated for a few days, under medical supervision, until medically certified as entirely free from any sign of fever, before being released from quarantine.

Towards the end of September we were again medically examined—throats, chests and hands—each tent separately. Wherever the medical officer found a doubtful case the whole tent was placed under observation and isolated some distance from the camp. These isolated parties drew their own rations, cooked their own meals, were excused all duty, had reveillé and slept when they liked, and generally lived a very independent, indolent existence.

Apropos of this one humorous incident occurred. At a late hour on the first night, the mounts which had accompanied their respective owners belonging to the tent previously situated next to ours into the isolated region, objected to their lonely exile. They broke loose and, although tethered together, stampeded madly back to our lines, stumbling over the tent ropes in their impetuous rush, and considerably startling the inmates.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST DAYS.

With a view to minimising the risks of further contagion and stamping out the fever in our battalion, upon the medical officer's advice it was finally decided to move the camp to Königsberg, some three miles from Waterfall.

In accordance with this decision " B " Squadron left Waterfall for the new camping ground on October 4th, and we followed the next morning. The galvanised iron hut, used as the officers' mess, was lifted bodily, amid cheers, on to a waggon, and thus conveyed in a very tottery condition to the new camp. Indeed, several waggons contained a fair proportion of assorted galvanised iron sheets for the erection of numerous little shanties. Consequently our horses were laden with extra kit.

Our progress was extremely slow, much of the delay being caused by these exasperating pieces of metal, with an ear-splitting bang and clatter, perpetually jolting off the waggons. Several yeomen, including myself, had to sit in various precarious positions on the waggons, and, at the risk of lacerating our hands, prevent these wretched jagged pieces of " scrap-iron " from slipping as we rumbled and jolted over the rough road.

Our camp at Königsberg was erected upon a different plan was heretofore. Each squadron was separated from the others at a distance of about 1,000 yards, so that the isolated units were spread over a very wide area. By adopting this precautionary measure it was hoped to mitigate further contagion, and thus entirely eradicate the fever from our battalion. Although separated, the various squadrons were not prohibited from holding intercourse with each other, but each performed their respective camp duties within their allotted spheres.

The camp was situated in a healthy, breezy locality, and upon a wide expanse of veld. At the bottom of a slope, at a short distance to the rear of our squadron, was a slow, turbid stream—part of the same river which eventually led to the gorge—where we bathed and watered our horses. About a mile to our front and situated on a crest, stood the dismantled fort or blockhouse of Königsberg, which, by virtue of its splendid dominant position, commanded a wide stretch of country towards Muller's Pass, in the Drakensbergs. To the west of Fort Königsberg stood a German Protestant Mission station, while close to the blockhouse was a Hindoo store or bazaar, from which we could obtain a variety of things, but principally such articles as came under the category of food or clothing.

Apart from the usual daily camp duties, picquets, guards, exercising the horses and manœuvring, we had much leisure in the afternoons and evenings for in-

dulging in bathing and laundry work at the river; also in numerous other recreations and hobbies. But we missed greatly our pleasant gorge at Waterfall. Indeed, upon the whole, we spent a happy, free-and-easy sort of existence. The worries of rent, rates and taxes troubled us not. Food and clothing were provided—we knew they would be forthcoming at the proper time, and accordingly did not worry ourselves. Happy mortals, to be so free from these daily cares and anxieties!

At Waterfall and Königsberg camps a canteen had been opened, where we could obtain numerous articles of diet—mostly of a tinned variety; also beer and ginger-beer, supplies being brought periodically from Newcastle. Major Chitty, being a strict abstainer, wisely regulated each man's consumption of beer to two pints a day. *After his departure from the battalion this rule was relaxed, and each man consumed as much as he cared to buy, commensurate with the available canteen supply. It was, therefore, scarcely to be wondered at that with all restrictions of individual consumption thus removed some yeomen, on occasional evenings, were liable to imbibe not wisely but too well. Their maudlin condition afterwards, although saddening, had its humorous aspect—at least to those who were sober. As an instance, one night two men re-

* The Major left our battalion on October 19th, to rejoin his regiment in India. Although a strict disciplinarian and apt at times to be severe, yet he was a good officer.

turned to our tent in a very talkative condition. One lit a cigarette, and in his maudlin state mistakenly inserted the lighted end in his mouth! Obviously that was the second occasion that evening he had burnt his mouth. What fools most men are when in liquor!

By the foregoing I do not wish to imply that drunkenness was prevalent in the camp. On the contrary, the men were remarkably sensible and sober fellows, whilst offenders were greatly in the minority.

Frequently during the evenings we would foregather in small groups at the cooks' camp fires, or at the numerous improvised anthill grates, and prepare our supper "bergoo" (porridge) in mess tin or "billy can." The enterprising cooks also prepared "dixey's" of porridge and hawked the hot, steaming stuff around the tents, for which they generally obtained a ready sale.

This month (October) being the wet season, there was a fair amount of rain and thunderstorms. The latter often occurred during the nights and in the mornings following the poor horses, stiff and shivering with the cold and wet, looked a dejected lot. Upon such occasions, when the rain had temporarily or finally ceased, we saddled up and gave them an hour's brisk trotting, the exercise imparting some warmth into their stiffened limbs. These periods of inclement weather were also a cause of some discomfort to ourselves. At such times we could only don our cloaks, fasten up the tents, huddle together in the foetid, damp

atmosphere and endeavour to exist as pleasantly as was possible under the circumstances. Of course, many sought warmth and comfort in the canteen.

With the advent of the summer the flies had become a perfect pest. In scores they swarmed into the tents, settling in dozens upon any exposed food, or irritating us by promenading over our faces or bared arms. At night-time they would retire to rest in the apex of the tent, their swarm making the canvas appear quite black. The insects' reveillé was fully two hours before our own, and they would persistently disturb our slumbers long before the official hour for rising.

Endeavours were made to purge the tents of this insect nuisance. The most usual methods adopted was either for three or four men in unison to fillip wet towels on the inner canvas, when the flies, finding their temporary habitations untenable, quickly evacuated them—only to return with renewed numbers and vigour when our operations ceased; or at night, when they were reposing at the top of the tent, to rout out these interlopers with lighted paper twists. This latter plan, however, had its disadvantages. The flies, thoroughly alarmed, swarmed around the tent or escaped through the open door in troops and squadrons. Others, with scorched or burnt wings, would drop upon us like a shower of currants, and afterwards we would find the poor, maimed creatures crawling among the folds of our blankets or in our kits.

We did not care often to resort to this inhuman practice of ridding—if only temporarily—our habitations of their presence, although this method seems no worse than the employment of the innumerable torture fly-traps and sticky papers so extensively used in civilised countries.

But the fly pest was not devoid of humour. On a dark night it was very tempting suddenly to pound upon a tent from the outside (not our own!) and then quickly decamp from the sounds of human uproar and commotion which the disturbed swarm of flies were causing within! During our latter days on trek, in the early hours of the morning, the tents were often struck, folded and packed on the waggon, before the slumbering flies had escaped from the canvas. When re-erecting the tents the ground beneath would be strewn with flattened-out, defunct flies.

The remount which I obtained at Vryheid and rode during the Zululand trek, and reputed to be a Russian horse, proved a terrible stumbler. Frequently it would unexpectedly slip or stumble without the slightest cause. This unfortunate characteristic much amused the men of our squadron, who considered me a proverbially "lucky fellow" to have escaped injury with such a beast.

At one of our morning manœuvres our troop experienced a chapter of accidents, in which my mount figured conspicuously. Starting from the rear base of

Konigsberg Fort, we had to cross about two miles of rough, open country as one of the parties outflanking "C" Squadron, who held defensive positions on a ridge located about a mile from our camp. Whilst our troop were cantering in close formation across an old mealie patch, my horse must have put his forelegs into a concealed hole, for without a moment's warning his forepart seemed suddenly to sink down and slide from under me. Before I could recover or even attempt to pull him up, I was shot over his head, fortunately losing my stirrups, but receiving at the same time a smart crack on my skull from my slung rifle. A trooper immediately behind foolishly attempted to "clear" us as we lay mixed up. Both rider and horse came crashing amongst us. For a few moments, amid the confusion, through the clouds of dust I dimly discerned the two horses lying upon their backs and kicking vigorously, while the remainder of the troop cantered quickly past. It is said that sometimes in moments of peril one's thoughts and attention are diverted from impending danger by some triviality. Perhaps that explains my state of mind, for almost, if not quite oblivious to my perilous position, for a few moments I lay fascinated by the huge masses of horse-flesh hurtling over and around me, and, in the vortex of an indescribable confusion of horselegs and hoofs pounding up clouds of dust, vaguely wondering when it would all end. Then a feeling of extreme annoyance for having made such a foolish exhibition possessed

me. Dazed, bruised and shaken (in the *melée* we had evidently received some kicks on our legs) my unhorsed chum and I picked ourselves up and limped after our mounts, who were already briskly following after the troop.

After this mishap we both rode more cautiously, although my horse repeatedly stumbled over the treacherous ground. Our troop had just forded a river, momentarily halting on the opposite bank just below the enemy's position, which we could then hear being vigorously assailed in front by the remainder of our squadron, when our officer gave the order to charge forward and attack them in the rear. As we dashed up the grassy slopes of the ridge, Trooper A. Francis endeavoured to get ahead of the troop, regardless of the treacherous ground. Suddenly, through his mount stepping in a grass-concealed hole, both rider and horse crashed violently to the ground. The rider lay dazed, while the horse struggled to release itself. Trooper Kane, who in the momentary excitement had endeavoured to forge ahead of Francis, collided with the latter as man and beast fell. Kane and his horse reeled and fell from this unexpected impact, the trooper's left leg being pinned beneath his mount. Both horses lay together in a heap, and the first, in its frantic efforts to extricate itself, commenced kicking violently close to Kane's head; but being a big, powerful man, and exhibiting a remarkable promptness and pluck, he deliberately seized a hoof in either

hand and endeavoured to guide the kicks clear of himself, at the same time dodging his head from side to side to avoid the blows. We soon extricated him from his very precarious position, and dragged the half-unconscious Francis to a place of safety. The latter's horse was soon on its feet, but Kane's, after a few convulsive kicks, expired with a dislocated neck.

While the officer and troop dashed forward and completed the rout of the enemy, Francis—who had been committed to my care, aided by Kane and another trooper—lay for some time in a semi-conscious condition before our efforts to revive him proved successful.

Undoubtedly we must have presented a whimsical appearance as we slowly wended our way campwards, for, happening to pass a Kaffir kraal *en route*, the natives came out and gazed at us with interest. Quickly divining our condition, the native women showed their practical sympathy by bringing us some water in their gourds or calabashes. We recompensed their generosity with *marli* (money) and cigarettes. They showed especial pleasure at the receipt of the "smokes." Certainly a *ticky* (threepenny-bit) is the most I have yet paid for a pint of "Adam's ale."

Adjoining the kraal was a small thicket of gum-trees where we tethered our horses and rested awhile in the cool, sequestered spot. Two of the native women, who could speak some broken English, were most affable, and, as they possessed a pack of cards, a quartette, consisting of the women and two troopers, were

soon busily engrossed in a quiet game of whist. The players made an exceedingly interesting group, and I much regretted I had not my camera with me.

Beyond a few bruises we were none the worse for our morning's exciting adventures.

A few evenings later the bugles suddenly sounded the fire alarm and "saddle up." Instantly the whole camp was in a state of commotion as we hastily unrugged and untethered our horses, saddled up, mounted and galloped across to the officers' lines. From there, as the men arrived indiscriminately, we were directed to an indefinite spot across the veld. No one knew where the supposed outbreak was, but each of us assiduously followed those ahead. We had a hazy notion that some isolated farm was ablaze and that we had been summoned to extinguish the conflagration. It was dangerous work galloping madly across the treacherous ground in the darkness, but fortunately we all arrived at our rendezvous, some three miles out, without mishap. Here the colonel, accompanied by some of the officers, who had awaited our arrival, complimented our squadron on the prompt manner in which it had turned out. As we saw no conflagration we presumed the fire was purely mythical, merely a false alarm to test our smartness in obeying the summons. We returned to camp at a walking pace, and, as it was Sunday, many indulged in hymn singing.

Unfortunately, during our brief absence, some sneaking fellow—whether a yeoman or a transport native, we never discovered—had seized this opportunity to pilfer some of the men's kits in the deserted tents. In the sergeants' tent the kits had been completely overhauled and several small articles were missing. It would certainly have gone hard with the offender had his identity been discovered!

On October 10th, the battalion held a gymkhana. There were several keenly contested events; horse, foot, "ride and run," "alarm, saddle up, and attack" races, all of which were followed with enthusiastic interest. One exciting horse race, open to the N.C.O.'s of the battalion, was won by Sergeant F. M. Gibbins—a native of Devonshire—on his horse "Sir Redvers."* Great amusement was caused by the native mule race, especially when a nigger fell from his mount, and, rising to a sitting posture, commenced rubbing his pate with an air of injured dignity and wry grimaces. Then, with much gesticulation, he strenuously opposed the efforts of the ambulance party to remove him, and had to be carried from the course a heap of struggling humanity.

A sad incident occurred on October 14th which for a while cast a painful gloom over the camp. Our squadron Sergeant-Major T. Trudgeon—who had re-

* Later, in response to a challenge from a professional jockey in the 154th Company, the same horse, ridden by Lance-Corporal C. Power—brother to the present huntsman of the East Devon Foxhounds—won by half-a-neck

joined us at Waterfall Camp from hospital—had during the few days previously been showing signs of ill-health. On this date he expired suddenly late at night—I believe from syncope. His body was taken into Newcastle the following day, but our battalion being in quarantine, only a privileged escort was allowed to accompany it and attend the last obsequies at the graveside. His genial, good-hearted disposition had made him a great favourite in our squadron, and we all keenly felt his sudden and unexpected end. In company with others who gave their lives for their country, his earthly remains now rest in the peaceful little cemetery at Newcastle, a stone monument, raised by subscription in our battalion, marking the spot.

Hitherto, in recording my experiences, I have not dwelt overmuch upon the religious aspect of the men in our battalion. A noticeable feature among the Welshmen, however, was their deep, inherent religious sentiments. Although outwardly their daily lives may have seemed to a superficial observer to have betokened a degree of religious indifference, they instinctively resented any attack on their faith. Generally speaking, even if they did not always openly profess inward spiritual convictions, they respected those who did. Moreover, they were quick to detect any sign of hypocrisy, or an apparent lack of fervour among the Chaplains. During our trek and in the quarantine camps we scarcely ever saw a Chaplain, and the men's spiritual needs were sadly neglected.

Probably the quarantine regulations prevented the Chaplains from visiting us.

Generally of a Sabbath forenoon, while at Waterfall Camp, there would be a shortened form of Divine Service conducted by Colonel Roch. An improvised choir, with a clarinet accompanist, attended to the musical portion. One Sunday we had no musical instrumentalist. An officer volunteered to lead the singing, but his loud, unmusical voice sounded abominable.

At Konigsberg, several yeomen gathered regularly on Sabbath evenings in a tent, where we sang several old familiar hymns. At the second and subsequent meetings I took the opportunity of reading some appropriate chapters from God's Word, which were received with deep interest and appreciation. One naturally regretted being unable to do more, but trusted that a blessing would rest upon these small efforts to witness for Christ. A favourite hymn was, "Jesu, Lover of my Soul," sung in Welsh to the grand old "Aberystwith" tune. Another dear old Welsh hymn was *The Bottle*. Its beauty and pathos is enshrined with a legendary halo. So far as I could gather, many years ago a vessel was wrecked in Cardigan Bay and eventually sank. During the time that its fate remained undecided, a Christian Welshman aboard penned the beautiful sentiment embodied in the hymn, which was placed in a bottle and com-

mitted to the waves, being washed ashore later, and from this pathetic incident it derived its title.

Subjoined is one of the verses in Welsh and English :

*Yn y defroedd mawr a'r tonan
Nid oes neb a ddeil fy mhen
Ond fy auwyl Briod Jesu
A fu farw ar y pren
Cyfaill yw yn afon augen
Ddeil fy mhen yn uwch na'r don
Golwg arno wna i mi gaun
Yn yr afon ddofn hon.*

*In the deep and mighty waters,
I have none to hold my head:
But my well-beloved Jesus,
Who hath suffered in my stead—
He's a friend in Jordan's swelling,
He'll uphold my sinking head,
Viewing Him I go rejoicing
Through the regions of the dead.*

Frequently on Sundays and week-days these two hymns would be started by one or more Welshmen, and it was delightful to listen to their inspiring strains, rendered in their mother tongue, as each man's part harmonised perfectly with the others.

But I found other opportunities for Christian work among my fellow yeomen. Some would make me their confidant, and in privacy tell me their family histories,

special weaknesses and temptations, besetting sins, failures, and desire to act differently—to turn over a new leaf—worldly prospects, hopes, schemes and anticipations for the future. One yeoman, whom I seemed to have impressed, candidly informed me that when between his blankets at nights he prayed for us all.

Even some married men with families, quite unabashed, took me into their confidence, speaking as only true husbands can, of the virtues, the sterling worth, the loving, truthful devotion of their respective wives. Being a bachelor, it was certainly rather embarrassing to find oneself such a highly-favoured confidant of these married men. At times their remarks made me quite feel that by remaining single I was losing much of Life's joys and bliss, and thus debarring myself from the society and loving companionship of a devoted, trusting, Christian helpmeet and partner. But I am still single.

Ostensibly they must have fully trusted me, otherwise they would doubtless have been less talkative.

During October rumours of all kinds were circulated regarding our embarkation for home. One of the more or less inspired but incredible was that we were to be attached to a cavalry regiment stationed in South Africa, and retained in the country upon the cavalry rate of pay until the following May. Speculation was rife; heated arguments grew apace. Irrepressibles would relieve their feelings by rushing from their tents and yelling: "Roll on the boat."

Nevertheless, amid all this uncertainty, our ranks were becoming gradually depleted by the departures of individual yeomen who had secured civil situations in the country.

On October 26th, no fresh cases of fever having been reported for three weeks, we were medically certified as immune and the quarantine restrictions withdrawn.

Immediate preparations were then undertaken for the despatch to England of those yeomen who had intimated their desire to obtain their discharges before the expiry of their stipulated twelve months' term of service. For a few days the camp was in a state of commotion and excitement—overhauling and packing of kits and handing in of rifles and equipments, etc., of those who were leaving us.

Their departure early on the 29th was signalised by hearty handshakes, jests, witticisms, badinage, repartees and other effusive displays of friendship so characteristic of the Briton, and who is yet often times so poignantly, depressingly demure and coldly reserved in his farewells before strangers and in public, but so impulsive, so heartily demonstrative when in his own clique or among a crowd of his own friends. Among the departures was our troop officer, Lieutenant J. De Rees.

Among the various Government pronouncements for the yeomen who were desirous of settling in the

country the following inducements were communicated to us.

To those yeomen who agreed to accept the Government's offer the following conditions were laid down :

(1) The Imperial authorities guaranteed them a free railway journey to Johannesburg, where they would be provided with free quarters and rations in the standing camp for about ten days, during which period the men could search for civil employment.

(2) To those who were unsuccessful in obtaining civil employment and desired to return to England, the Government guaranteed a free passage. Applications had to be made within a certain period (three months, I believe) from the date of their discharge. No army pay was to be made to these men during the voyage home.

Several yeomen took advantage of the Government's offer and on November 1st our battalion was further depleted by their departure for Newcastle *en route* for the Transvaal.* Amongst them was Quarter-Master-

* Some secured positions in the country, others returned home. A number accepted the mine owners' offer of employment - I believe at the instigation of a certain Mr. Cresswell to work on the mines as unskilled labourers at a commencing salary of five shillings a day. To this I believe was included whole or partial board and lodging. Some months later I ascertained that practically all the yeomen who accepted this work resigned their posts and went elsewhere, as the conditions were totally unsuited for the employment of white unskilled labour.

Sergeant Munn, also my own particular chum, Lance-Corporal Torkington.*

A few days after the yeomen's departure on November 1st, our surplus horses were taken to the remount depot at Newcastle. Amongst them was my old stumbler, which I was not sorry to exchange for a smart, roan-coloured cob.

Amongst the innumerable vacancies arising from the great depletion in our ranks, included those of officers' cooks, servants and grooms. A few weeks previously the squadron sergeant-major had sounded me, at Captain Buckley's instigation, respecting my willingness to fill the contemplated vacancy arising from his servant's departure. Therefore, I was in a measure prepared for the officer's kindly invitation to fill the post. He was one of our best officers, and being an ardent shapshottist, had taken a deep interest in me and my photographic work. As enthusiastic amateurs, upon several occasions, in a friendly manner, we had freely discussed the several little points and difficulties arising in the pursuit of our absorbing hobby. It would, therefore, have given me much pleasure to have

* He was the son of a retired Army officer, Captain Torkington of Kent, well connected, had lived for a time in Tasmania, and during his sea apprenticeship, which had expired just prior to his enlistment in the Imperial Yeomanry, had travelled considerably. He was a bright, upright, intelligent fellow, a trifle over-sensitive but without exhibiting a very careful and persevering nature, a willingness to turn his hand to anything. The conscientious discharge of the duties allotted to him and his manly, genial disposition, won the warm praise and high esteem of everyone. He secured a position in the South African Constabulary and later a civil berth at Boksberg. We corresponded after my return to England, but after some months' silence, a much belated missive of mine was returned to me by his parents with the sad intelligence of his death from pneumonia.

complied with his request, but understanding that my duties would probably involve some assistance at the preparation of the meals, I felt bound to decline. With the remembrance of my previous unsatisfactory experiences as officers' cook, the natural inference was that with a probable repetition of the interference among my fellow-servants, I should fail in giving adequate attention to my officer's personal requirements. Apparently he had considered my acceptance as a foregone conclusion, and appeared much disappointed by my decision.

However, he seemed to divine and appreciate my motive, for the next day he offered me the vacant post of orderly to the medical officer. My predecessor, who had accompanied the first batch of yeomen to England, had left the hospital lines in a very filthy condition, the tent I had to occupy being full of garbage and kit oddments, and upon which swarms of flies had congregated. The genial medical officer willingly acquiesced to my desire to remove the tent to a more sanitary spot, and promised to have a fatigue party sent down to strike it. Whilst he was considering the matter, I struck and pitched it myself upon another plot, which rather astonished him. There was plenty to do that day in thoroughly cleansing the place, making an inventory of the hospital equipment, and getting my tent cosy. As only one patient was detained for a few hours with a touch of dysentery, the work was not arduous. Indeed, without a favourite hobby one would

have engendered repeated attacks of *ennui*, as the hospital tents and ambulance waggon, being situated about 500 yards from the nearest part of the camp, I was practically a recluse. My sole companion was my cob, which daily I groomed, watered, fed, and rode to the quartermaster's stores to draw our rations. The doctor slept in a little corrugated iron shanty near my tent, and, being without a servant, each morning I prepared his bath and coffee, and made his bed. As he was not an early riser, usually he breakfasted alone in the officers' mess long after the others. Excepting on one occasion when, on his account, I rode some five miles to Kennedy's Farm (where the Colonial farmer treated me very hospitably), he troubled me but little during the day-time.

Although our battalion had not been privileged to engage in actual hostilities, our martial zeal had not abated in consequence. At this time a Colonial officer offered to raise, on behalf of the Imperial Government, a contingent of Yeomanry for active service in Somaliland, and volunteers were asked for in our battalion. With some few exceptions, every yeoman volunteered. The Government, however, whilst appreciating the patriotic spirit prompting the offer, declined our services, accepting only the Boer contingent. Indeed, so anxious were some of us for an opportunity of engaging in actual warfare that when a rumour got abroad that the American Government were offering to enlist ex-soldiers and ex-yeomen for service with the United

States Army in the Philippine Islands, several yeomen wrote to the United States Consul at Durban for particulars.

On November 6th the remains of our battalion left Konigsberg and trekked to Newcastle, and crossing the railway and drift—close to the military hospital and cemetery—travelled about five miles south-east beyond the town to Fort Macready, so named after a dismantled blockhouse in the locality.

Here we were camped close to the 35th and 36th Battalions of Yeomanry; Captain Adjutant E. G. Williams, Battalion Sergeant-major J. Armstrong, Quartermaster-sergeant Lee, and the headquarter staff—which had remained at Newcastle since the previous June—joined us; the medical officer was attached to the Newcastle Stationary Hospital; our field hospital was disbanded, and I was again returned to duty with my troop.

The surrounding country was typical veldland, undulating, also plains with occasional kopjes. About eight miles to the north-east we could see Umbana blockhouse, while near our camp were some coal-mines belonging to the Newcastle Colliery Company.

We soon struck up an acquaintance with the European overseers, who had charge of the native mine labourers. One afternoon we inspected the native compound, but the inmates fled at the sight of my camera! Also we inspected the mine. The long winding shaft or passage tunnelled into the side of a hill.

The air within was cold and damp, whilst the ghostly glimmer shed by our flickering candle created eerie shapes and fantastic shadows, intensifying the surrounding impenetrable blackness which seemed to envelop us with a strangely realistic and yet invisible mantle as we stumbled along over the rails or collided with stationary trucks. It was a weird experience, and the open air and sunshine came as a pleasant relief.

On Monday, November 10th, the 33rd, 34th, 35th, and 36th Battalions of Yeomanry rode to Newcastle to take part, with the other troops garrisoning the town, in the trooping of the colours and the march past in honour of His Majesty the King's birthday. This parade took place just outside the town, a goodly number of civilians foregathering to witness the event.

Under the direction of General Featherstonhaugh—the officer in command of the Newcastle district—the following troops paraded:—The Garrison Staff, the Middlesex Regiment, the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment, Royal Field Artillery, Mounted Infantry, 33rd, 34th, 35th, and 36th Battalions of Imperial Yeomanry, details of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The troops, in order of their respective regiments, were drawn up in a long line facing the general, who was accompanied by his staff and the crowds of interested spectators. Amid loud and prolonged cheers the Royal Standard was unfurled and saluted. Then followed the "march past" the general and his staff by the troops in batteries, companies and squadrons. The

troops having re-formed into line opposite were addressed by the general and the proceedings then terminated.

In addition to the daily camp fatigues, stables, main and grazing guards, picquets, exercising and watering horses (we had to take them nearly a mile to the Buffalo River), there were quarter-master's fatigues in town with the battalion's ration waggons. Also, on account of an outbreak of scarlet fever among the men of the 2nd Battalion of Dragoon Guards and their consequent isolation to a quarantine camp, the Yeomanry battalions, in rotation, supplied the necessary guards for the commissariat stores at Newcastle Railway station, which had hitherto been carried out by the Dragoons.

Every Sabbath morning, the 34th, 35th and 36th Battalions of Yeomanry mustered near our camp for church parade, a Chaplain from Newcastle officiating, the service lasting for about an hour.

Having obtained a short furlough, I left Newcastle on November 21st and proceeded to Harrismith, which was reached the next day. Breaking my journey at Ladysmith, I stayed at the Royal Hotel for the first night, which gave me an opportunity of taking a rapid survey of the town. The town-hall clock tower still exhibited outward signs of the late bombardment from the Boer guns. Upon some waste ground at the rear of this building, which had been occupied by the hos-

pital tents during the memorable siege, was erected a showman's paradise, where the musical instrument of the ubiquitous "round-about" ground out its hurdy-gurdy strains with a monotonous regularity, occasionally relieved by a shrill whistle. In marked contrast to the sombre, drab and otherwise hideous male clothing generally worn by the present generation in most civilised countries, the large proportion of gaily attired Hindoos, who were patronising this form of pleasurable locomotion, combined to form an interesting and picturesque scene with their quaint costumes and diversities of colour.

Harrismith seemed very quiet and prosaic after the stirring war conditions under which I had previously seen it. Then all had been excitement, bustle and activity; mounted troops arriving and departing with the mobile columns operating in the drives against De Wet.

It was very pleasant to renew old acquaintances among many old comrades in the 1st South Staffordshire and the 2nd East Yorkshire Regiments (of the Eight Division), who were still garrisoning the town; also at Number "19" Stationary Hospital. The men of Number "14" troop, South African Constabulary, also treated me very hospitably. Yes, "Tommy," whatever his faults and imperfections may be—and he is only human like the rest of us—has a good heart, a readiness to do a comrade a good turn.

At the Grosvenor Hotel, where I lodged, were billeted some repatriated Boer prisoners, just arrived from Ceylon preparatory to returning to their farms. Their dark looks and sullen countenances with which they greeted my appearance in the public dining-room was not altogether calculated to inspire much confidence in their professed loyalty as British subjects. Indeed, only one Boer conversed with me in a friendly manner.

After a few days pleasant holiday, re-visiting old scenes, and meeting with old acquaintances, I returned to Newcastle. Whilst awaiting a change of trains at Ladysmith, a violent thunderstorm, accompanied by a deluge of rain, swept over the town and across the surrounding country. By the time Newcastle was reached (1.45 a.m.) the whole landscape was sodden and full of quagmires.

It was partially due to this condition of affairs that a little adventure befel me which might have terminated more seriously. Immediately on my arrival I had decided to walk the five miles to camp without waiting for daylight. Owing to the heavy, sodden condition of the veld and the very dark night, after crossing the railway I followed some newly-made, deep waggon-ruts, mistaking them for the road. Upon arriving at the drift (which on previous occasions had been seen by daylight as a half-dry spruit) I found instead a steep, wide, swollen stream. This one naturally concluded was due to the storm, as it is a

common occurrence in South Africa, after a deluge of rain, for a half-dry stream to be quickly transformed into a swollen, rushing river. Where the stream was fordable I managed to get across over some planks. Further on, the road trailed off to nothingness, the waggon ruts disappeared, and I soon found myself floundering on the veld. Determined not to retrace my steps, my next attempt was to push across the veld in the direction of our camp, with a confident anticipation of soon striking the right road. Taking the row of station lights behind me as a base, I knew that so long as they were kept on my right rear my progress was in the right direction. But when, on occasionally glancing backwards, the lights constantly disappeared and re-appeared, plainly proving that I must be walking in a circle. This impression was verified on my striking the railway track about two miles from the station, and near the Utrecht road.

Turning in the opposite direction, and proceeding a short distance I stopped short, suddenly attracted by a sonorous, mournful roar which seemed to rise up from some depth immediately below me. Cautiously glancing about I then dimly discerned that I was practically standing on the slippery edge of a steep bank, with a sheer drop of fifty to sixty feet to the swollen, turbulent stream below. As there seemed to be no fordable spot across this rushing, roaring torrent and no visible means of reaching it without

tumbling down the bank, I was eventually compelled to retrace my steps towards Newcastle, but without much difficulty, being guided by certain landmarks noted on my outward journey. After having zig-zagged some five miles over the veld, and, when near the town, I struck the right road at dawn (3.30 a.m.), reaching camp at reveillé, none the worse for my little adventure, but having received some personal—and I hope beneficial—training at scouting.

On the previous evening an *al fresco* concert was in full swing when the proceedings were abruptly terminated by the sudden storm. According to accounts it swept over the camp like a waterspout, the majority of tents had been swamped, and the men compelled to sleep in their sodden blankets. Some of the tents, including the canteen, had been damaged, whilst the borrowed piano used at the concert was none too dry.

Towards the end of November further offers were made by the Imperial Government to the Imperial Yeomanry still in South Africa.

All Yeomen who had enlisted after January, 1902, were given the option of three alternatives: (1) to take their discharge in South Africa; (2) to finish their period of service in South Africa, being sent to Stellenbosch and Cape Town for garrison duty, and, at its completion, to England, if desired; (3) to return to England with the remainder of the battalion and be discharged on arrival.

Those who decided to be discharged before the termination of their twelve months' military service had to sign a statement to the effect that after their discharge they had no further claim on the Government.

A few days later the yeomen who desired to complete their period of service in South Africa entrained for Stellenbosch.

As on previous occasions all sorts of wild, and in many cases, highly improbable rumours, were again freely propagated, discussed, criticised and discredited according to individual temperament and the fertility of their imaginative powers; the first draft to leave England were those who had enlisted before January 16th, 1902; the whole battalion would stay in South Africa until the end of January; the battalion was to trek to Mooi River preparatory to an early embarkation; the battalion was to sail almost immediately; etc.

And so we lived, or rather existed, through a period of restless, impatient uncertainty. The oppressive heat of summer was now upon us. When off duty we lay sweltering in the hot, sultry atmosphere of our tents—which were like ovens—there was but little shade in the open, and the fierce glare of the sun, reflected from the dry, brown veld, fairly made our eyes ache. Our appetites were small, and our accumulated rations lay in the tents invaded by a swarm of ceaseless, tormenting flies. We ate little, but

drank a lot! By turns we were constantly brewing private supplies of tea and coffee.

Statistics have proved that the mortality among the British troops from disease contracted during the campaign greatly outnumbered those who died from gunshot wounds, the most malignant, enteric fever, dysentery and diarrhoea being in the majority of cases directly traceable to the insanitary condition of the water supplies, over which more stringent measures should have been insistently maintained. It goes without saying that if men constantly filled their water bottles from any polluted stream on the line of march—doubtless teeming with typhoid bacteria—they ran considerable risk of contracting the malady. Although every endeavour was made by the medical officers to ascertain the condition of the water supply near the camping grounds, this precaution did not prevent hot, thirsty men, while on the trek, from filling their water bottles from any dirty stream and drinking freely of the filthy stuff.

Thus from medical testimony it is clearly evident that had the military authorities, during the South African campaign, insisted more stringently on the drinking water being wholly or at least partially purified, the great mortality among our troops, due in a large measure to their drinking impure water, would have been greatly minimised. Undoubtedly, in a measure, this difficulty would have been overcome if

each regiment and unit had possessed a sufficiency of filters.

Our yeomanry battalion's watercarts always contained an efficient supply of water, thus obviating any necessity for the men to help themselves from polluted streams. But obviously the water being taken in an unboiled state did not greatly diminish the risks involved of contamination. At Fort Macready some attempts at remedying this were carried out. Several raised tanks were placed near the cook's quarters, fires were kindled in the recesses beneath the tanks and the water thoroughly boiled. Although recognising, from an hygienic standpoint, the benefit of drinking this water in preference to the unboiled, the warm liquid was very insipid to most palates and not extensively patronised.

Soon after the departure of the yeomen to Stellenbosch, it became apparent that our embarkation was only a question of days. Our mounts, together with those of the 35th and 36th Battalions, were sent into Newcastle, and our saddlery, arms, accoutrements and half the tents were handed into the quarter-master's stores.

Having thus lost our tent, a corporal, two troopers and myself spent the last remaining days in camp beneath the shelter of a hastily erected bivouac, which we improvised from a piece of old canvas. It was a tight fit for four men. The heat inside was stifling—we could only enter by crawling, and there was



AFTERNOON TEA AT FORT MACREADY.



TROOPER T. C. WETTON.
(The Author).

absolutely no room to move about when once inside. Indeed, it would have been quite impossible to have swung the proverbial cat in it. I claimed and obtained my position next to the entrance.

On December 5th we struck camp and left in waggons for Newcastle station. As the vehicles moved off the Kaffirs from the neighbouring kraals swarmed over the vacated ground, grubbing about for all sorts of pickings.

The 33rd, 34th, 35th, and 36th Battalions entrained at Newcastle at ten o'clock in the morning, and as we steamed out of the station many civilians and ex-yeomen, who had foregathered to witness our departure, accorded us an enthusiastic send-off. Their heartiness greatly impressed us and we instinctively realised we were leaving behind us many old acquaintances. The warm-hearted Colonials are always so naturally thorough in their hospitable friendship.

Our battalion was fortunate in obtaining closed carriages, as some of the others had to travel in open trucks, exposed to the heat and glare of the sun, and by the time we halted at Ladysmith for tea, they looked uncomfortably hot and exhausted. The River Tugela—which was then in flood—was crossed at sunset and we then settled down for the night. In our cramped quarters there was but little slumber for the majority, but such inconveniences did not much distress us.

We breakfasted the following morning at Inchanga Station and reached Durban at ten o'clock. During the last few miles of the journey our impulsive exuberance ran riot, and found vent in bombarding the native railway workers with our surplus rations and kit; bread, biscuit, bully beef, tins of jam, bottles, tin mugs, knives, forks, etc., rained down in a perfect hurricane upon these coloured sons of toil. But the astonished natives were not lax in appropriating these missiles, although some were seen rubbing their pates ruefully or removing the traces of coffee and jam from their countenances after the fusillade. After handing in our blankets we were towed out to the s.s. *Orotova*, anchored outside Durban.

The other troops aboard were the 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment—amongst whom I met several old comrades—the hospital with R.A.M.C. details; also some forty-three Boer prisoners (rebels) *en route* from Ceylon to Cape Town for trial. I had an interesting conversation with one of them—claiming to be a Free Stater—who knew many of my civilian friends residing in Harrismith and Bethlehem.

The Yeomanry were berthed in the forepart of the vessel and the 2nd East Yorks aft. For the first few hours after our departure from Durban the majority of the troops were prostrated with *mal-de-mer*. Some who attempted to pass the night on deck were bundled below at two o'clock by the sailors swabbing the decks.

Cape Town was reached at an early hour on December 9th, and we berthed at noon close to the transport s.s. *Montrose*, also with troops aboard for England. Here we remained for several days coaling and filling our water tanks. The Boer prisoners were disembarked, and, in charge of the civil police, driven away in a "Black Maria."

We met several of our old chums who had previously sought for employment at Johannesburg and who had drifted to Cape Town. Two of them had obtained employment in the Cape Town civil police. Others were returning home as indulgence passengers in the s.s. *Montrose*. Colonel T. Roch remained in the country for a few weeks longer, and Captain Buckley returned by another vessel. The 30th Battalion of Yeomanry—who had been operating in the Malmesbury district in Cape Colony—also embarked on our vessel.

One morning at six o'clock, we marched to the sea shore near Green Point and bathed. But our anticipations of a refreshing swim were rudely dispelled. For about one hundred yards or more the shore was strewn with rocks and covered by about a foot of water, and by the time we had got past the worst of these obstacles into deeper water, the bugle recalled us to shore.

On December 13th we bade farewell to South Africa. There were some regrets at leaving the land where we had encountered so many varied experiences, but

the majority of the troops seemed pleased at the prospect of being at last "homeward bound."

With the exception of the days when we were south of the Equator and also passing through the Tropics, the weather experienced during our homeward journey was upon the whole fair and pleasant, and during the greater part of the time we slept on deck at nights.

Life aboard possessed many similar characteristics to the voyage out. There were the same duties, guards, fire alarms, amusements, recreations and songs. The prospect of "home" and all it held dear to us infused a spirit of *esprit de corps*, gaiety, and abandonment of care. Light-heartedness and merriment prevailed everywhere—excepting, perhaps, among some poor military prisoners aboard.

Among the several acquaintances aboard I met Lieutenant L. C. V. Bathurst—formerly a member of an English county cricket club. When the war broke out he had served as a sergeant in the 62nd Company (Middlesex) Yeomanry, when we had previously met in Bethlehem. Later he obtained a commission in the 30th Battalion of Yeomanry. Our meeting was a very cordial one.

Swabbing the decks at unearthly hours possessed other disadvantages besides scattering the ordinary yeomen deck sleepers. Paradoxical as it may at first seem, we had an "open air" guard room. This was situated on the aft deck. The night I was on guard, through an oversight the sailors started swabbing

this portion of the deck at their usually unearthly hour. Naturally at this onslaught, the men then awaiting their turn for "sentry-go" sought refuge and slumber in drier regions. Consequently when the next time for the relief arrived the sergeant of the guard couldn't find all of his new sentries to post, and, being on "sentry-go" at the time, I was perforce compelled to stay at my post for three hours instead of two. But my "relief" honourably made amends during the day.

One yeoman in our mess, whom I will call "Billy," during the voyage home frequently exhibited unmistakable signs of greediness—especially at dinner time.

This meal usually consisted of soup, meat, potatoes and pudding, and each man had to make his one plate respectively answer for the three courses. The plates were arranged at the head of the tables where the two mess orderlies apportioned to each man his share of the particular course then being served.

Billy would hurry over his soup in record time, generally succeeding in getting his plate ready before the others for the following course and indicating to the orderlies which particular cut of the joint he required. A sprint through his meat and potatoes would get him well ahead of the others on the second course. With a final spurt over the third "lap" he often beat "all comers," having sufficient time (and presumably capacity) to cover an additional portion of the last course—should any remain. These gluttonous dis-

plays of gastronomic record-breaking disgusted rather than enamoured us, and one day a favourable opportunity occurred for me to administer a rather telling rebuke.

It happened during the beginning of the second course. In his great eagerness to obtain his favourite portion—a well-cooked piece of meat on a bone—Billy held his plate above the others which were arranged in front of the orderly carving the joint, when his attention was momentarily diverted and the carver in mistake dropped the coveted portion upon mine. The greedy yeoman was furious and the outburst of merriment that his disappointment caused among the others did not abate his anger. He took his loss with a bad grace and indulged in a violent diatribe on my conduct. One could afford to indulge in cynical smiles at his irrelevant denunciations and the sarcastic banter from the others which his outburst naturally evoked. As he seemed to feel his loss so deeply I chivalrously offered him the bone when I had finished with it. Then, finally, as he continued obdurate, to clinch the matter, I challenged him to come on deck and pull off his coat. He refused but continued throughout the remainder of the meal to indulge in useless recriminations.

The other men immensely enjoyed his foolish display. With sarcastic condolences of "Poor Billy, did he want a bone?"—"He shall have a bone"—"What a shame to take his bone"—Here Billy, here's my

bone," and suiting the action to the word, the poor fellow was fairly bombarded from the surrounding messes with greasy bones. At nearly every meal for the remainder of the voyage he was subjected to sarcastic "bony" references.

On Christmas Eve I was again on "sentry-go." The orderly officer happened to be Lieutenant Stenhouse, of the East Yorks. He had been a patient in the hospital at Bethlehem a few months previously as a result of a gunshot wound received in an engagement near the town. When he visited the sentries at eleven o'clock he recognised me immediately, and, without any affectation, conversed freely for a long time upon our previous campaign experiences and other topics, and cordially shook hands at parting. Such gentlemen as these are a credit to the British Army.

Unfortunately, on Christmas Eve, Trooper Larson, of the 35th Battalion of Yeomanry, died from enteric fever. At five o'clock on Christmas morning, while it was yet dark, his battalion paraded on deck and attended to pay the last respects to the memory of their departed comrade, and the boundless ocean claimed the dead as her own.

The following memorial verses were penned by H. Brigham, one of the crew:—

"ORATAVA," *Christmas, 1902.*

ON A SOLDIER'S DEATH.

It was early night when there hove in sight

Grim Death, with relentless hand;

On Christmas Eve a soul took its leave

To join the dread ghostly band.

There comes to each one when life's task is done

The call to the spirit roll;

Neither rich or poor the end may abjure

Or refuse to pay Nature's toll.

Not a sound was heard, but muffled each word,

When our comrade was summoned away;

We felt that the gloom that announces the tomb

Savoured of death and decay.

Boys of the I.Y., you can conquer or die

In the everyday battles of life;

Wherever you be—on the land or the sea—

May you return to home, mother, and wife.

Now and then give a thought to the one who has fought,

To the one who has trekked by your side;

O'er your comrade asleep there's many will weep

For the lad who has sickened and died.

Saint Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, was reached early on Christmas morning. The weather was ideal. As we were coaling all day until our departure in the evening, our grimy environment was most unpropitious for any participation in the Yule festivities. Accordingly these were deferred until Boxing Day. The saloon was decorated tastefully and the troops received extra rations; some Christmas pudding, also two oranges per man. But a concert which had been arranged for the evening was postponed on account of the boisterous weather.

Previously I had spent two Christmases on the South African veld, but this was my first at sea. Personally, I consider Christmas spent in Old England is the ideal!

A few hours after our departure from Saint Vincent we encountered strong westerly winds, which freshened considerably as we advanced northward. The warm, balmy air which we had hitherto been experiencing ceased, and the weather grew bleaker and very tempestuous. With the high seas that were running and the waves constantly breaking over the sides of the vessel, the steamer rolling and pitching without cessation hour after hour, our condition was not of the brightest. Battened down in the stuffy mess-decks below, or crouching in sheltered nooks and crannies on deck, we felt miserable, clammy, and horribly sick.

Immediately after parade one morning, I escaped aft, by the East Yorks' quarters, where the motion of the vessel was less acute, and remained in a sheltered nook all day, endeavouring to pass the long, dreary hours by alternately reading and inwardly bemoaning my lot. My appearance that night at the mess was the signal for an ovation. My mess-mates, having missed me all day, had been searching about—except of course, at the right place—and were beginning to wonder if I had fallen overboard.

Cape Finisterre was passed in the afternoon of

December 31st, and after a calmer passage through the Bay of Biscay, we sighted the Ushant lighthouse on the evening of January 1st (1903).

January 2nd dawned raw and hazy. But long before the first signs of daylight we had been busy checking and handing in our hammocks and blankets. Above and below the decks everyone seemed to be doing something in the blanket line.

To the expectant watchers eagerly scanning the horizon, Portland was discerned through the cold, clammy sea haze. A few hours later the Needles hove in sight, the vessel slowly steamed up the Solent, entered Southampton Water, and late in the afternoon reached Southampton.

After remaining quartered in Salamanca Barracks, South Camp, Aldershot, for a few days, the remaining members of the now disbanded 34th Battalion of Yeomanry dispersed to their respective homes.

* * * * *

As I pen these concluding sentences and review our former experiences in South Africa, I seem to live once again among my comrades in those dear old times and realise, that although our battalion saw no actual warfare, we have the satisfaction of knowing that, despite all our shortcomings, we were prepared, ready, and eager for any emergency.

I would that my own countrymen more completely realised—even as our brethren in the King's Dominions

beyond the Seas have already begun to realise—that the only practical solution for safeguarding our priceless heritage, our birthright, and the more perfect development of our high Imperial Destiny, lies in the immediate adoption of Universal training of the Nation's manhood—a vital necessity, so ably and persistently advocated by our highly-esteemed veteran Field-Marshal.

It is impossible, of course, to forecast what future International complications may arise. But should duty again call upon Briton's sons to uphold her honour and world-wide supremacy among the nations—as possibly She may before long—I sincerely trust that among the ranks of these defenders may be found not a few of us of the "Old 34th."

Meanwhile, in making my exit, I thank my readers for their kind indulgence, and extending my right hand of fellowship, bid my former Yeomen comrades

ADIEU.

151st Company ("A" Squadron).

Abbott, A.	Francis, C. T.	Rees, J. A.
Aldridge, G.	Frisby, W.	Roberts, E.
Bale, A.	Gardiner, E.	Roberts, I. (L'Cpl.)
Bennett, F.	Gibbins, F. M. (Sgt.)	Roberts, S.
Billing, E. (Sgt.)	Givons, A. D. (Orderly- room Sergeant)	Rogers, S. (Sgt.)
Bithell, J.	Gough, L. R.	Rowland, W.
Boylin, C.	Greene, H. D.	Saunders, J.
Browning, T. (Sgt.)	Griffiths, W. R.	Scott, A.
Bulow, A. E. (L'Cpl.)	Grimley, A.	Scott, H.
Bulow, J. (Bugler)	Hammond, J.	Shone, E.
Bullivant, E.	Helme, W.	Shore, A.
Burridge, C.	Hewitt, H.	Simpson, J.
Caddy, H.	Holloway, R. (Cpl.)	Spiller, W. J.
Carr, F.	Hubbard, W.	Staniforth, E.
Carver, F. (Sgt.)	Hughes, J. D.	Stephens, J.
Catherall, J. (Sgt.)	Humphries, J.	Stephens, W.
Cave, A.	Jolliffe, S. (Farrier Sgt.)	Stevens, F.
Ceats, S.	Jones, E. R.	Sygrove, W.
Chaney, W.	Jones, P. E.	Thomas, A.
Charles, T.	jones, R.	Thomas, G.
Chapman, H.	Jones, W.	Thomas, S.
Clarke, A.	Kane, T.	Tiffin, P. (Cpl.)
Clarke, G.	Lathan, B.	Torkington, L. J. (L'Cpl.)
Constant, E.	Lindop, J. T.	Trout, J.
Cooper, C.	Mc Fie.	Trudgeon, T.
Cotton, A.	Mc Nally.	(Sqn. S.M.)
Crocker, W. (L'Cpl.)	Miller, R. L.	Underwood.
Davies, C. (Sgt.)	Morgan, C.	Wakefield, S.
Davies, E.	Mortimer, J. H.	Walker, E.
Davies, Ll.	Munn, F. W. (Quarter- Master Sergeant)	Warner, T.
Davies, J.	Nell, C. (Sergeant)	Wetton, T. C.
Edge, T. (Cpl.)	Peel, R.	Whelan, D. (L'Cpl.)
Ellis, G.	Porter, S. (Bugler)	Whitton, A. (L'Cpl.)
Elston, F.	Potter, H.	Wilford, T.
Fairweather, C. (Cpl.)	Power C. (L'Corporal)	Wills, J.
Ford, W.	Price, J.	Wilson, F.
Fowler, F.		Wood, J.
Francis, A.		Wynne, M.
		Wynne, R.

152nd Company ("B" Squadron).

Aitken, W.	Jarvis, R.	Slaymakes, B.
Alcock, W.	Johnson, G.	Smith, F.
Alfray, J.	Joy, M.	Smith, W.
Anderson, W.	Kemp, J.	Snow, J.
Ashton, H.	Kendall, P.	Stacey, W.
Aspray, J.	Kendall, W.	Standing, S.
Atkinson, R.	Leng, J.	Stanners, F.
Aust, A.	Lewis, J.	Stephenson, J. (Sqdn.
Balmforth, G.	Lightfoot, G.	Sergeant-Major).
Bellow, J.	Low, F. (Corporal).	Stone, A. S.
Blundell, J.	Low, J.	Thomas, H.
Bonnel, J.	Manning, W.	Thomas, W.
Bowles, S.	Mason, J. (Sergeant).	Townsend, G.
Bowman, J.	Mason, S.	Tranter, R.
Boswell, W.	Meade, C.	Truelove, A.
Bousher, F.	Meade, H.	Turner, W.
Brotheridge, J.	Meldrum, T.	Tyrell, E.
Bundy, C.	Meogan, E.	Upstone, E.
Buxton, A.	Mitchell, J.	Vickers, W.
Cleal, R.	Moss, T.	West, S.
Cooke, W.	Neville, J.	Whereat, A.
Crichton, D. (Cpl.)	Nicholls, R. (Sergeant)	White, D.
Dulson, H.	Norgate, J.	White, F. J.
Earle, C.	Nugent, A.	Whitting, C.
Elliott, E.	Outhet, A.	Willes, W.
Fane, A.	Parker, E.	Withers, F.
Farrell, T.	Parker, F.	Winslip, G.
Filtness, D. (Quarter	Parker, W.	Woods, R. E.
Master Sergeant).	Peters, J. C.	Woolger, A.
Ford, H.	Peverley, J.	Wyatt, E. (Corporal).
Forward, A.	Phillips, C. F.	
Godfrey, A.	Pitcher, L.	
Goth, G.	Poland, A.	
Grant, G.	Pressley, G. (Corporal).	
Gravelly, H.	Pryce, W.	
Gudgeon, E.	Ranger, H.	
Halfacree, A.	Renforth, G.	
Hart, J. (Bugler).	Richardson, F.	
Hawksby, H.	Roberts, H.	
Histed, F.	Rodgers, J. T.	
Hughes, T.	Ross, J.	
Illsley, G.	Scanlen, F.	
Illsley, W.	Shaw, J.	

153rd Company ("C" Squadron).

Allen, B.	Hawkes, W.	Salmon, T.
Austee, J.	Hawking, E.	Sedman, J.
Bannister, W.	Hawkins, A. (Sgt.)	Shelton, C.
Barraclough, F.	Headings, A.	Shepherd, W.
Bartlett, W.	Heath, T.	Sherman, G.
Barton, W.	Hensleigh, W.	Smith, C.
Benson, W.	Horsfield, W.	Smith, H.
Best, H.	Howard, H.	Smith, S.
Bonnel, A.	Huckin, G.	Sparkham, C.
Booker, F. (Corporal)	Hume, A.	Spear, A.
Breeze, C.	Hunt, H.	Stevens, P. S. (Orderly room Sergeant).
Briggs, W.	Hunter, R.	Taylor, W. H.
Brighton, E.	Jackson, G.	Taylor, S.
Brogden, H.	Jarvis, H.	Tester, L.
Brooks, G.	Jones, E.	Thompson, G.
Bruce, W.	Knapton, D.	Thompson, G.
Butterfield.	Latham, W.	Thompson, H.
Cannop, F.	Lennox, W.	Thompson, T.
Chelland, A.	Lewis, S. (Sergeant).	Titmus, C. (Corporal)
Chilcott, F.	Linfoot, G.	Toney, A.
Chilvers, J.	Lockwood, H.	Vasey, J.
Conduit, B.	Longhorn, R.	Wallace, E.
Cook, F.	(Farrier-Sergeant).	Wallace, J.
Corbett, B.	Malby, J. (Q.M. Sgt.)	Ward, H.
Dawn, J.	Montague, A. (Cpl.)	Watson, G.
Day, H. (Corporal).	Moss, Z.	Webster, W.
Day, J.	Muir, W. G.	White, J.
Dene, H.	Newman, G.	Willis, A. (Sergeant).
Eaton, H.	Oldfield, E.	Wright, J.
Eden, F.	Owens, T.	
Ellerton, F.	Pamphlin, H.	
Ellis, J.	Pearman, W. (Cpl.)	
Farnoll, H.	Perry, H. G.	
Flowers, H.	Pexton, J.	
Forth, J.	Phillips, O. J.	
Francis, C.	Piper, C.	
Gardner, J. (Sqdn. Sergeant-major).	Powell, R.	
Green, W. (Sergeant)	Prior, W.	
Greening, R.	Ray, W. (Corporal).	
Gilbert, W.	Roberts, C.	
Hall, C.	Roberts, E.	
Hampton, H.	Robertson, J.	
	Rose, H. (Farrier-Sgt)	

154th Company ("D" Squadron).

Adams, A.	Hallet, D.	Reid, A.
Aitken, A.	Hand, J.	Reynolds, W.
Armes, B.	Harren, A.	Rippon, W.
Armstrong, J.	Hill, R. (Sergeant).	Rodgers, T.
(Battn. Sgt.-major).	Howe, F.	Sayer, H.
Ash, G.	Hunter, A.	Swann, R.
Baker, S.	Hunter, W.	Sanderson, A.
Baker, W.	James, J.	Seaman, H.
Batey, W.	Jones, L.	Sharp, S.
Beard, R.	Jones, W.	Shepherd, B.
Bell, J.	Jopling, G.	Smalley, G.
Bennett, W.	Kewley, E.	Smith, A.
Bishop.	Kirkwood, D.	Smith, A.
Black, F.	Langham, G.	Smith, A. R.
Blackburn, A.	Lawson, J.	Smith, T.
Bradley, T.	Lee, W. (Battn. Q.M.	Spencer, T.
Brown, A.	Sergeant).	Stephenson, G.
Brown, W.	Livingstone, D.	Stevens, F.
Budd, J. J.	Logan, J.	Storer, T.
Clark, D.	Lyon, J.	Sutherland, E.
Clementson, G.	Lytton, W.	Taylor, J.
Collins, J.	Marley, W. (Farrier-	Thompson, E.
Cook, H.	Sergeant).	Thompson, G.
Cooper, W.	Marshall, D.	Thompson, J.
Copeland, F.	Martin, J.	Tinsley, S.
Daniells, G.	Maughan, J.	Warner, E.
(Lance-Corporal).	McCaskie, T.	Wagh, E.
Dodds, J.	McGregor, E.	Wearn, R.
Dodds, M.	McNiel, A.	Webster, A.
Ettringham, R.	Moses, T.	Wilkie, J.
Fleming, J.	Mould, J.	Willis, W.
Frances, F.	Nesham, A.	Willmore, W.
Frances, J.	Page, F.	Wilson, F.
Gowland.	Pegg, M.	Wilson, T.
Green, G.	Potter, J.	Withers, W.
Greener, G.	Priestley, E.	Woods, H.
Greenwell, J.	Rabjohn, G.	Young, A.

Although I have endeavoured—where doubt existed—to verify the respective non-com. rank of Yeomen in "B," "C," and "D" Squadrons in the above nominal roll, I offer my sincere apologies for any inaccuracies in its compilation.

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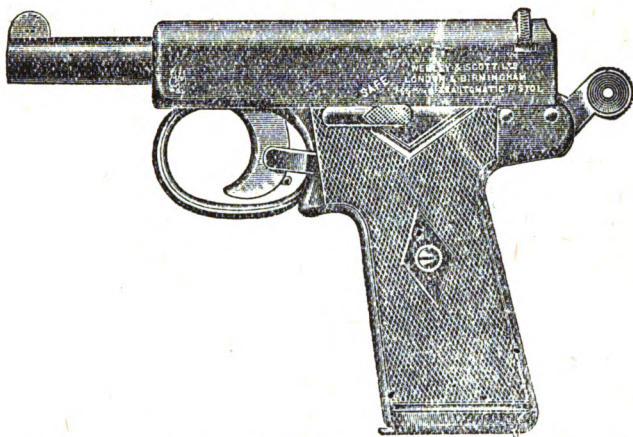
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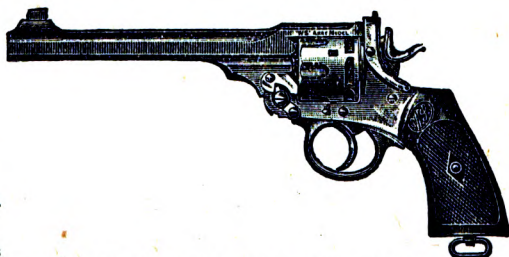


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